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COLLECTOR'S ISSUE: THE PWI "500" TURNS 30!

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IT'S MY FIRST *PWI* "500" issue at the Editor's desk, compiled in a year that is utterly without precedent. Our annual list, like the world at large, looks a lot different in 2020. Social conditions impacted wrestling in completely unexpected ways, and that, in turn, informed our approach to ranking the world's top wrestlers.

You can read more about all this in the introduction to the list (page 13), as well as in the "Takes" at the end of the issue. But, before you do, I'd like to take this opportunity to address a change in the list you won't read about anywhere else in these pages: For the first time in 30 years, Jushin "Thunder" Liger is not ranked in the *PWI* "500."

A lot has changed since *PWI* staff first began ranking the top 500 wrestlers back in 1991, but Liger has been the one constant. From his inclusion in the inaugural list (#27) to his career-low ranking last year (#357), the Hall-of-Famer has weathered every trend and remained uber-influential. Meanwhile, legend after legend has stepped down, as others gamely stepped up to take their place. And, every time a truly great wrestler retired, they were no longer eligible for inclusion in the "500."

Of course, a few have stepped away from the business . . . only to return years later and once again make the list. Take Shawn Michaels. Between 1999 and 2002, the presumably retired Michaels was ineligible for the "500." After returning to the ring, he ranked every year until his eventual retirement. But I cannot see a scenario where Jushin Liger chooses to compete again. Not after the emotional, two-day send-off he was given at this year's Wrestle Kingdom.

Liger chose to step away not because of injury—like HBK before his first "retirement"—but because it was time. "I realized I was not developing any further," he revealed in an interview with New Japan. "I realized that no matter how much I was using the skills I had cultivated, there was just no growth left inside me."

I can't help but think about a certain wrestler, who I'll leave unnamed, who recently commented that he'd never had a match where his opponent was "so good" they inspired him to step up his game. Yet, here was Liger—unquestionably one of the most respected, talented men ever to lace up a pair of wrestling boots—choosing to hang those same boots up the very moment he realized he wasn't growing as a performer.

Jushin "Thunder" Liger never ranked #1 in the "500." He did crack the top 10 three times: 1997 (#9), 1998 (#9), and 2000 (#8). More to the point, by consistently making the list for 29 straight years, he created a streak that will likely never be duplicated. And, for those three-odd decades, wrestling fans were incredibly lucky to have him.

Kevin McElvaney
Editor-in-Chief

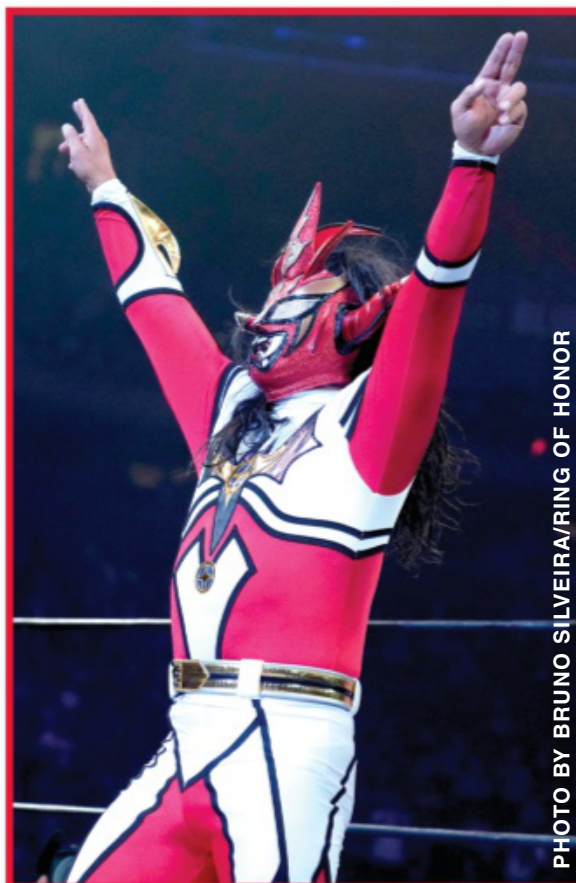


PHOTO BY BRUNO SILVEIRA/RING OF HONOR

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RINGSIDE

WITH HARRY BURKETT

THE COVID-19 CRISIS has effectively stalled the world economy and industry in 2020, prompting an unexpected pause in most of our lives and some important discussions in our culture ... and professional wrestling.

Pro wrestling somehow emerged largely unscathed during the peak of the #MeToo movement in 2017-19. But that seemed to change in the course of one day: Thursday, June 18, when another simple hashtag, #SpeakingOut, inspired many allegations that involved

a who's who of the industry. The question became this: Would a performer's value to a company be a factor in how these allegations were handled?

The major test case seemed to be that of **Matt Riddle**. His *Smackdown* debut was scheduled for the very next day, and a former coworker accused him of forcing her to perform a sexual act on him while on the road. Riddle's attorney, and his wife, responded that the woman had been stalking and harassing Riddle for years. Other evidence, including texts, seemed to confirm an affair between the two. Within the murky area of this "he said/she said" scenario, would it be fair of WWE to punish Riddle just as he's on the verge of his big break? This would be grossly unfair if the allegations turned out to be false, just as it would be unfair to promote Riddle if the allegations were true.

Sadly, there are enough of these accusations to catalog in alphabetical order. Here is a partial list:

Jim Cornette: A wrestler accused Cornette and his wife of strong-arming talent into sexual activities while both were involved with WWE's former developmental territory, Ohio Valley Wrestling, many years ago.

Dave Crist: An ex-girlfriend made abuse allegations against Crist, a member of oVe and a former X division champion. He was released by Impact Wrestling.

Michael Elgin: Initially suspended but then released entirely, Elgin's tenure in Impact Wrestling ended due to allegations of inappropriate behavior. Elgin became one of several stars who went online to deny charges.

Jimmy Havoc: An ex-girlfriend stated the AEW mid-carder was capable of self-harm and verbal abuse during their relationship, an accusation magnified by reports of heavy drinking, including punching a fan at a bar and getting into a scuffle with Excalibur.

Jack Gallagher: The *205 Live* star left WWE amid accusations that he acted inappropriately toward a woman at a party several years ago.

Dave Lagana: The second-most powerful executive in the NWA, in charge of the company's video production, was accused by a former roommate of committing sexual assault. This has really derailed the NWA.

Jay Lethal: Former Women of Honor champion Kelly Klein accused Lethal of sexually harassing female peers. Taeler Hendrix, a former ROH star, had made similar allegations.

Mike Quackenbush: The founder of CHIKARA and owner of the Wrestle Factory stepped down amid allegations of abuse and neglect soon after CHIKARA star Kobald was removed from the roster for sexual misconduct.

Joey Ryan: Several inappropriate actions were reported about Ryan, who developed a cult following on the West Coast before gaining attention with Impact Wrestling. Impact fired Ryan, and he has since deleted his Twitter account.

Marty Scurll: ROH's head booker admitted to acting inappropriate with a minor while intoxicated dur-

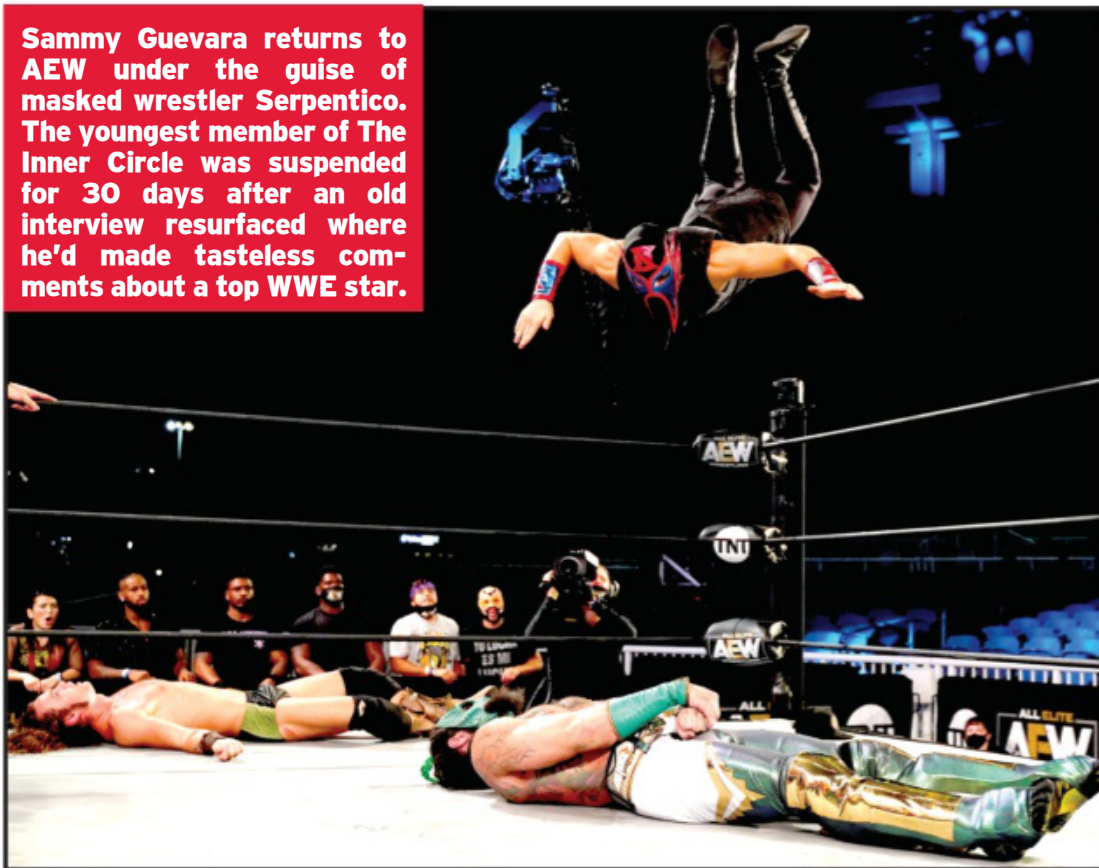
PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO



One day before his scheduled *Smackdown* debut, Matt Riddle was accused of sexual assault by a former coworker (an accusation he denies). Harry Burkett wonders how a wrestler's perceived value to a company might influence the handling of such claims.

Sammy Guevara returns to AEW under the guise of masked wrestler Serpentico. The youngest member of The Inner Circle was suspended for 30 days after an old interview resurfaced where he'd made tasteless comments about a top WWE star.

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW



ing a party. The woman's father produced a message of Scurll apologizing for making advances on his 16-year-old daughter.

David Starr: A former girlfriend said her relationship with the indie headliner was verbally and physically abusive. Starr was summarily stripped of multiple championships in the fallout from these allegations.

Velveteen Dream: The former NXT North American champ was accused of sending inappropriate texts to minors in attempts to groom them. He had denied similar accusations several months earlier.

The British scene, in particular, has been scandalized by allegations against **Travis Banks**, **Joe Coffey**, **Jordan Devlin**, **Ligero**, and **Trent Seven**, among others.

Many of the wrestlers and promoters accused have released statements about these allegations, while others have chosen to remain silent. It's important to remember that allegations alone are not evidence of guilt.

The #SpeakingOut movement has shined a light on other instances of inappropriate behavior. **Sammy Guevara's** horrible remarks during a 2016 episode of the *Raw's 4th Hour* podcast,

which recently came to light, resulted in AEW suspending him for 30 days and ordering him to undertake sensitivity training. Guevara made a tasteless joke about **Sasha Banks** that made reference to sexual assault. His salary was donated to the Women's Center of Jacksonville during his suspension.

"Sammy completed four weeks of extensive sensitivity training, and his curriculum included subject matters of tolerance, gender, race relations, and why people's

words matter," AEW President and CEO **Tony Khan** told **Justin Barrasso** with *Sports Illustrated*. "During his suspension, he was very contrite. I asked him to use that time to try and become a better person, and I think he did."

Guevara returned to AEW *Dynami-te* on July 22 with considerable fanfare, removing a mask and celebrating with fellow Inner Circle members **Chris Jericho**, **Jake Hager**, **Santana**, and **Ortiz**.

Racial diversity is also a major topic, and the industry seems to be responding in this regard. While numbers aren't the defining metric, it is worth mentioning that eight out of WWE's 14 champions based in the U.S. (Raw, Smackdown, and NXT) are people of color.

Speaking of which, then-North American champion **Keith Lee** ended the record-breaking 396-day NXT title reign of Adam Cole in a winner-takes-all match at NXT's "Great American Bash" special on July 1. Lee retained both belts against **Dominik Dijakovic** two weeks later.

Oddly enough, new arrival **Karri-on Kross** targeted Dijakovic to get the attention of the new champion, administering a brutal beatdown of Lee's rival on television. Obviously,



At the end of Slammiversary, Eddie Edwards stands tall with the Impact heavyweight title. As champ, he'll need to contend with some of the hungry wrestlers who've beaten him in recent months.

PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD/IMPACT WRESTLING



NXT champion Keith Lee slams longtime rival Dominik Dijakovic in a match where both the NXT and NXT North American belts were on the line.

this battle of the big men—Lee vs. Kross—is coming very soon.

Lee has since relinquished the North American title to focus solely on the NXT championship.

EVIL upset **Tetsuya Naito** for the IWGP World and Intercontinental titles at New Japan's Dominion pay-per-view on July 12. He received assistance from Bullet Club members as well as 29-year veteran **Dick Togo**, who (with EVIL) joined the heel faction in the process.

While outside interference is unusual in New Japan title bouts, and he enters his dual reigns with much to prove, EVIL has enjoyed a hot run in 2020 so far, teaming with **Shingo Takagi** and **BUSHI** to beat four other teams in a gauntlet match for the NEVER openweight six-man title at Wrestle Kingdom 14, and defeating **Kazuchika Okada** in the final of the New Japan Cup.

EVIL kept both straps against **Hiromu Takahashi** on July 25 at Sengoku Lord in Nagoya 2020.

After **Tessa Blanchard** was

stripped of the Impact championship due to stalled contract talks and her failure to appear at Impact Wrestling's TV tapings, **Eddie Edwards** grabbed the mantle, besting **Ace Austin**, **Rich Swann**, **Trey**, and the returning **Eric Young** in a five-way elimination match at Slammiversary on July 18. **Karl Anderson** and **Doc (Luke) Gallows**, appearing as **The Good Brothers**, made their Impact debut as a team, helping Edwards fend off Austin and **Madman Fulton** at the end of the show.

Edwards retained the title against Trey at an *Impact Wrestling* taping the following day.

In business notes, WWE released its second-quarter earnings report, with \$223.4-million in revenue compared to \$268.9-million during the same period in 2019. Most of the difference was attributed to last year's Super ShowDown being held during last year's second quarter, not that COVID-19 has killed WWE's touring business. WWE's surpris-

ingly strong financial numbers—thanks to TV rights fees, Network subscriptions, and strong online merchandise sales—during the pandemic have caused some WWE executives to question if an exhaustive touring schedule is even necessary in the future.

Mr. Wrestling II, hailed by a generation as wrestling's "Paragon of Probity," passed away on June 9 at age 85. As chants of "II, II" reverberated throughout Atlanta's Omni and Tampa's Fort Homer Hesterly Armory in the 1970s and early-'80s, it's hard to believe that **Johnny Walker** spent the previous decade as only a journeyman wrestler in the South, quit the business for a few years, and then occasionally donned a mask as **The Grappler**. Walker was running a gas station when Georgia promoter **Paul Jones** lured him back to the business, initially as the partner of "**Mr. Wrestling**" **Tim Woods**.

Yet Mr. Wrestling II's gravelly voice and solid moral compass connected with Georgia and Florida fans, especially when he stared straight at the TV cameras. Late in his career, Wrestling II was engaged in one of the greatest teacher-student rivalries of all-time (second only to **Bruno Sammartino** vs. **Larry Zbyszko**), against **Magnum T.A.** in the Mid-South. II, then the North American champ, became increasingly jealous of his protégé, resulting in a feud for the ages.

Mark "Rollerball" Rocco—who helped revolutionize the sport by integrating technical grappling, high-flying, and smash-mouth styles, particularly among lighter wrestlers—died in his native England at age 69 on July 30.

Rocco's battles for heavy and middleweight titles against stars such as **Marty Jones**, **Chris Adams**, and **Dynamite Kid** made him a star in the late-1970s. By the early-1980s, Rocco was feuding with **Tiger Mask** in the U.K.



For Southern wrestling fans in the 1970s, Mr. Wrestling II was as good as good could get. The man behind the mask, Johnny Walker, passed away in June at age 85.

(known there as **Sammy Lee**) in a rivalry that continued in New Japan, where Rocco appeared as **Black Tiger**. His 1980s rivals included **Frank Cullen**, **Robbie Brookside**, **Fuji Yamada**, **Kendo Nagasaki** (Peter Thornley), **Fit Finlay**, and **Dave Taylor**. A heart condition forced him to retire in 1991.

Other deaths include **Z-Barr**, who inspired one of wrestling's first viral videos when **Zandig** and **Nick Mondo** buried him under hundreds of chairs (age 38); **Kat LeRoux**, whose highlight was her series of bouts against NWA U.S. Women's champion **Misty Blue** during the 1987 Great American Bash tour (age 51); **Big Slam**, a staple of East Coast indies in the 1990s and early-2000s who

bore a strong resemblance to **Big Van Vader** (age 54); **Killer Brooks**, who stormed the South and Southwest during the 1970s and '80s and trained Keith Lee (age 72); **Zoltan Boscik**, who fled the Communist invasion of Hungary in 1956 and became a rival to British stars such as **Johnny Saint**, **Steve Grey**, **Al Miquet**, and **Jon Cortez** (age 81); **Shirley Love**, a West Virginia news anchor who formerly hosted *Saturday Night Wrestling* for over 20 years (age 87); and **Regis Philbin**, who enthusiastically supported pro wrestling and often spoke of his friendship with **Fred Blassie** during his legendary talk-show career (age 88).

That's all for now. Save a ringside seat for me. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

HOW TO HANDLE IT?

I fear there will be many unsatisfying conclusions to these situations as women bravely sharing their stories receive the angry label of "accusers." And many of the accused men view these incidents quite differently. I described the Matt Riddle situation as a test case, but, in all fairness to Riddle, I don't know the details of WWE's investigation. I hope the major companies establish a process to handle these matters thoroughly and fairly.

A HUNTED CHAMPION

As a former ROH and GHC champion, Eddie Edwards should never be relegated to the mid-card ranks and it's good to see him regain the Impact title, a belt he hasn't held in three years. His mixed win-loss record in recent months may come back to haunt him, however, as Ace Austin and Madman Fulton—both of whom scored victories over Edwards in the month of June alone—will rightfully demand title shots.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR \$25,000?

Both Killer Brooks and Mr. Wrestling II died this past June, and the two men were involved in one of wrestling's biggest scandals in the spring of 1983. Killer Brooks sold the NWA National title, which he had just won from Paul Orndorff, to Larry Zbyszko for \$25,000. NWA President Bob Geigel stripped Zbyszko of the belt and held a one-night tournament at the Omni, where Zbyszko beat MWII to become champion legally.

RESPECT FOR REGIS

Back in 1983, I didn't know much about Regis Philbin other than he was a New York talk-show host who occasionally appeared on *Hollywood Squares*. Then I saw a 1960s photo of Philbin in an issue of *WWF Magazine*, where, along with his daughter, he was standing with Fred Blassie and comedian Moms Mabley. This guy Regis was a wrestling fan—in an era when few celebrities would admit to being one. He had my instant respect!

HOTSEAT

AN INCISIVE INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THE SPORT'S TOP STARS

PHOTO BY SADIEL "SPEEDY" RUIZ/AEW

**JON
MOXLEY**

Unconventional, unflappable, and undefeated. The three words are an apt depiction of Jon Moxley, who's deftly risen to the top of the sport over the last year. And, in his 14th appearance on this list, the "Death Rider" rides to the top of the **PWI** "500." True to form, the AEW World champion received the news of his achievement with less enthusiasm than he would watching the sunset from his pickup truck alongside his wife, WWE announcer Renee Young.

It's not that Moxley isn't proud of what he's accomplished in the last year, including going unbeaten in singles matches in AEW and proving nearly unstoppable in New Japan (where he still holds the IWGP U.S. championship). It's that, in his post-WWE wrestling career, the former Dean Ambrose refuses to be motivated by anything other than his love of the sport ... and his quest to enjoy it. His approach seems to be working pretty well.

In this interview with **PWI** Senior Writer Al Castle, Moxley talks about his journey from studying this annual list of the world's greatest wrestlers to conquering it.

Castle: Congratulations on being the 2020 **PWI** "500" #1 ranked wrestler. I'm always interested when I talk to wrestlers who I know were fans as kids, to hear their memories of the "500," or of reading the magazine as a kid. Can you tell us anything about that?

Moxley: When I was a kid in the mid '90s, the internet was not as much of a pronounced thing as it is now, where everybody has smart phones, computers, and stuff. Back then, I didn't even have a computer. So, the extent of anything that went on behind the scenes, or any closer look at what wrestling was, for me was the magazines at the newsstand. A new one came out, and I would just sit there at the newsstand and pore through every single detail of them. A lot of my early education was those magazines. I was obsessed with them. I'd go to flea markets and scour for any wrestling tapes I could find.



Jon Moxley celebrates before a red-hot crowd after beating Chris Jericho for the AEW World title. Though COVID-19 has kept fans from cheering him on in person, "Mox" remains grateful that he's able to continue doing what he loves.

I collected them all—like, stacks and stacks of magazines. And I would just pore through every single detail of those things.

Castle: Do you remember the first time seeing yourself on the *PWI* "500"? For what it's worth, it was in 2006, and you ranked at number 447.

Moxley: I imagine at the time I was pretty excited that my name was in a magazine. What a novel concept: From when you're a little kid and it's just a dream and you're imagining it, to the first time. I don't care what anybody says. The first time you see your name in print somewhere, it's pretty cool.

Castle: So, did we get this right? Are you the best wrestler of the last 12 months?

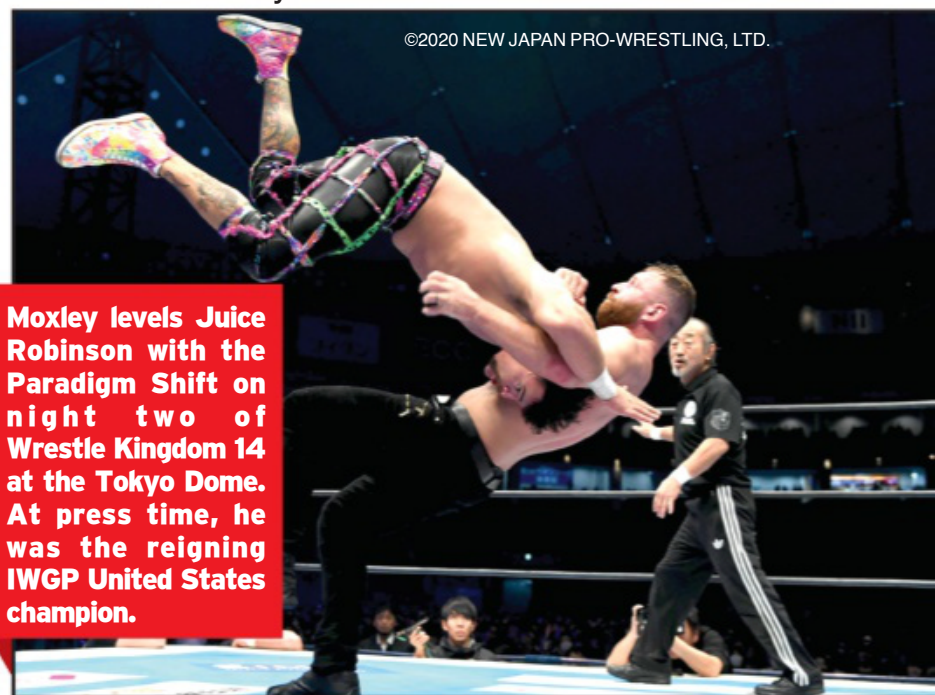
Moxley: I don't know. I'm not one to pat myself on the back. These days, I'm wrestling for me. I'm not really looking for any external validation from anybody

or anything like that. But it is pretty cool. Where I was at mentally at the beginning of 2019 was pretty low. So, for it to be 2020, and I'm sitting where I'm at now, it's pretty awesome. To be number one—it's like I said, those magazines were such a big part of my childhood. It was such a dream. And it just goes to show that, no matter who you are, no matter how poor you are, or where you come from ... Back then, when I was reading those magazines, I was like, the quiet kid who got picked on. I was in special classes because they were trying to diagnose me with all these social anxiety disorders and stuff. And I'd get mocked for watching wrestling. And, at that point, it's just like this fanciful dream, and everyone thinks you're crazy. But, if you want it bad enough, you go ahead and chase your dreams, man. Because it just goes to show that anything can happen.

or anything like that. But it is pretty cool. Where I was at mentally at the beginning of 2019 was pretty low. So, for it to be 2020, and I'm sitting where I'm at now, it's pretty awesome. To be number one—it's like I said, those magazines were such a big part of my

Castle: In putting your bio together, I thought a lot about the Chris Jericho podcast interview you did where, there was this man there who really seemed hellbent—not on proving yourself, because I think you already had—but on showing that the WWE's system was broken, and proving that there was a better way. Is it some kind of vindication that you achieved this level of success outside of WWE that you never did while you were there?

Moxley: There is some of that there. But I try to just maintain the same kind of mindset I had when I originally left. My thought was that I was just going to kind of disappear for a while—maybe go to Japan, maybe wrestle under a mask. Basically, just be low key. I was like, "I'm just going to go take myself off-Broadway," and just kind of start over and get back to just wrestling for the love of it and figure it all out again, and come up with a new style or new look or whatever ...



Moxley levels Juice Robinson with the Paradigm Shift on night two of Wrestle Kingdom 14 at the Tokyo Dome. At press time, he was the reigning IWGP United States champion.

"I'm not looking for external validation. But *PWI* was such a big part of my childhood. To be number one ... It's pretty cool."



Brian Cage is one of many worthy contenders to have tried the champ and failed. Moxley remained undefeated in AEW singles bouts through our evaluation period.

a new presentation, the whole thing. And then, maybe a year later, maybe I'll come back on the national scene. It didn't go like that at all. I popped immediately right in everybody's faces, which turned out to be cool in a different way. But I've tried to maintain the mindset that I'm just wrestling because it's a blessing and joy to be a pro wrestler, and I'm pretty good at it, and let's just have fun.

Castle: Because 2019 was so much fun and you were able to accomplish all these life goals, has it made the last few months especially difficult—having the plug pulled on all of it? The red-hot crowds that you were performing in front of every week on *Dynamite* are not there. You don't get to go to Japan at all. And, on top of that, your wife was dealing with COVID-19 firsthand. Has it all been really deflating?

Moxley: Yeah, I mean, everybody in the world is deflated. It's literally something that's affected the entire world. So yeah, I mean, it sucks, because AEW had a red-hot crowd. They loved being a part of that show. The fans are as big a part of the show as any of the wrestlers. Not having them sucks right now. But they will be

back, and it will be hotter than ever, eventually, when the world becomes a safer place. And, for me, the audience is a really big part of my presentation. I don't like to put myself over, but when I come out, the place goes nuts. It's part of the atmosphere. We don't have that, and that's not ideal. But we're adapting and adjusting and doing the best we can to try to give it the liveliest atmosphere we possibly can. I've been determined throughout this whole thing to not feel sorry for myself. It sucks to win a title on a Saturday and then that following Wednesday is the last time we're ever in front of people. I want to come out in front of 20,000 people and defend the title. But, I'm not going to complain. There are people out there who are going through actual hard times, that are losing their jobs, that have been furloughed, or their family is sick. Maybe even worse. Maybe they lost people. There are people so badly affected by this. I'm not going to cry because we can't wrestle in front of fans. That's a small sacrifice. I'm determined not to bellyache about anything. I'm very fortunate and blessed. My wife had it, but she got through it, and I never got it somehow.

Castle: I realized today that you, Seth [Rollins], and Roman [Reigns] have all been number 1 on the *PWI* "500." I don't think

that's ever happened before with a tag team, much less three guys who came into the national spotlight together, all achieving this success at the very top. What does that say about the three of you?

Moxley: When we came in, it was a different atmosphere in the locker room. It was a lot harder for young guys to really get a shot to move up the card. Even getting out of developmental was tough. It was like we were on an island in FCW, hoping that, maybe every once in a while, somebody gets off the island. We had a lot of pent-up aggression, because me and Seth thought we were having the best matches in the company down in FCW, and nobody was paying attention. So, we come in with this attitude and chip on our shoulder. And a lot of people don't like us. But we stuck together, and we all knew that we could all be top stars. We were driving together in the car, and we had an all-for-one, one-for-all attitude. We knew we were going to shake up this thing, and take it over. And we were not going to be stopped. I think it shows that we were right, all these years later. □



After an incredible year, Jon Moxley joins his former Shield cohorts, Seth Rollins and Roman Reigns, on the elite list of wrestlers to top the *PWI* "500"—proof, if any were needed, that this rough-and-tumble brawler is a top-tier star.

THE 30TH ANNUAL

PWI
500

AEW HAS OFFICIALLY ARRIVED

WHEN LAST YEAR'S "500" dropped, All Elite Wrestling was still in its infancy. Though the company's first two official events—Double or Nothing and Fyter Fest—both took place within our previous evaluation period, AEW was a month away from the premiere of its flagship weekly TV program, *Dynamite*. Over the last 12 months, AEW has emerged as perhaps the most legitimate competition WWE has seen since the era of the Monday Night War. WWE responded in kind by moving its pre-taped *NXT* broadcasts to the USA Network, where they aired, live, opposite *Dynamite*.

Of course, in the era of COVID-19, both shows now typically tape in advance, but the spirit of competition has led to the advent of a new ratings war on Wednesday nights. Most weeks, AEW has won those ratings battles. Much of the credit goes to its two biggest stars ... both of whom appear in the top five of this year's "500."

Meanwhile, WWE has ceased its live touring schedule, greatly reducing the activity levels that have always played a major role in its stars making the "500." It's an odd time for pro wrestling, but it's also a more level playing field than we've seen in quite some time. While WWE talent still dominate this year's list, the juggernaut's monopoly is being challenged from all sides. Consider not only the growing popularity of AEW, but also the increased visibility of promotions across America (and Japan). To be sure, WWE is still the biggest dog in the park; it's just got plenty of company. And this year's "500" goes to show those other dogs—particularly All Elite Wrestling—pack a powerful bite.

The *PWI* "500" rankings are compiled after hours of meetings of a committee of *PWI* writers and editors. This year's bios were written by: Al Castle, Harry Burkett, Mike Bessler, Brian Solomon, Louie Dee, Brady Hicks, Jason McVeigh, Ashley Morris, Jake Joyce, and Andrea Hangst.

PWI extends its gratitude to STRIGGA and Kris Zellner (both on our weekly ratings committee) for their input concerning Japanese and Mexican wrestling, respectively. Special thanks also to Righteous Reg, whose influential 2019 list, the Black Wrecellence 250, proved an invaluable reference for us as we compiled the 2020 *PWI* "500." (Reg offers his take on this year's "500" on page 78.)

The criteria for the *PWI* "500" (in order of importance) are as follows:

- * Win-loss record
- * Technical ability
- * Influence on the sport
- * Success against the highest grade of competition
- * Success against the most diverse competition
- * Activity

The *PWI* "500" is not a ranking for the calendar year January through December. The "evaluation period" this year ran from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

Wrestlers must meet the following requirements for activity to be considered for a ranking: 20 matches during the evaluation period or at least one match in seven separate months. Exceptions were made for wrestlers who were on track to complete these requirements prior to COVID-19. Also considered on a case-by-case basis: wrestlers whose careers were impacted by #SpeakingOut allegations. (See page 76.)

The numbers in parentheses following each name represent the wrestler's height, weight, years of pro experience, and ranking in the 2019 *PWI* "500." An "NL" means the wrestler was not listed a year ago. Following the ratings is an alphabetical list of the *PWI* "500" (page 74), as well as commentary from our two senior writers (pages 76-77).

JON MOXLEY

01

HEIGHT: 6'4"
WEIGHT: 225
YEARS PRO: 16
2019 RANK: 20

PATH TO
NUMBER 1

447 IN 2006
371 IN 2007
471 IN 2009
103 IN 2010
102 IN 2011
254 IN 2012
26 IN 2013
18 IN 2014
13 IN 2015
09 IN 2016
07 IN 2017
106 IN 2018
20 IN 2019

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

TOP FIVE MOMENTS
DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Flattened Chris Jericho with his Paradigm Shift DDT in the main event of the Revolution pay-per-view event in February to become the second AEW World champion.
2. Bested Kenny Omega in a brutal "Lights Out" unsanctioned grudge match at November's Full Gear pay-per-view.
3. Beat Lance Archer on night one of NJPW's Wrestle Kingdom 14 event in the Tokyo Dome to capture the IWGP United States championship.
4. Choked out Brodie Lee to earn the referee's decision in a World title match at AEW's Double or Nothing on May 23.
5. Recorded his first successful World title defense by beating Jake Hager in a no-holds-barred match on the April 15 edition of AEW *Dynamite*.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 1

When the former Dean Ambrose joined AEW in the spring of 2019, he was on a mission to prove that, freed of the constraints of what he saw as a bankrupt creative system in WWE, he could be one of the sport's top stars ... Mission accomplished ... The reigning AEW World champion has been quite literally unbeatable since joining the company, having never lost an AEW singles match ... Also still holds a major title for another top promotion, as New Japan's reigning U.S. champion ... Hasn't defended that title since February, in large part because of NJPW's pandemic shutdown ... If the Combat Zone Wrestling alum has one shortcoming, it's his penchant for "hardcore" wrestling, which has repeatedly drawn him into the kinds of bloody, brutal brawls that have a way of shortening careers ... Has no shortage of potential challengers, including MJF, Cody Rhodes, and Darby Allin—which could make for some mouth-watering match-ups for fans ... A true original, Moxley is beloved by fans for his unbridled passion, which comes through in every match, every promo, and every second he's on camera.

ADAM COLE

02

HEIGHT: 6'
WEIGHT: 210
YEARS PRO: 12
2019 RANK: 18

PATH TO NUMBER 2

206 IN 2001
89 IN 2002
61 IN 2003
77 IN 2004
76 IN 2005
16 IN 2006
17 IN 2007
13 IN 2008
27 IN 2009
44 IN 2010
15 IN 2011
04 IN 2012
11 IN 2013
01 IN 2014
14 IN 2015
NL IN 2016
NL IN 2017
91 IN 2018



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TOP FIVE MOMENTS DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Bested former champion Tommaso Ciampa in the main event of February's TakeOver: Portland event to retain the NXT title.
2. Again retained the title by beating Velveteen Dream in a wild backlot brawl at May's TakeOver: In Your House.
3. Visited *Smackdown* on November 1 and successfully defended his NXT title against multiple-time world champion Daniel Bryan, beating him with his patented Panama Sunrise/Last Shot combination.
4. Beat another former world champion, Finn Balor, to retain his title on the December 18 edition of *NXT* on USA.
5. Successfully defended his NXT title on one of WWE's signature pay-per-views, Survivor Series, against Pete Dunne in a show-stealing bout.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 2

On paper, Adam Cole shouldn't be a success in WWE ... He's got pretty boy looks but is cast as a dastardly villain ... He's got cruiserweight dimensions, yet he's been tasked with defending his title against true heavyweights ... And, although he struggled to win the NXT title, he's held it longer than anyone in its eight-year history ... He's also made history in the pages of this magazine, becoming the highest-ranking NXT wrestler ever in the *PWI* "500" ... *PWI* readers also chose Cole as the 2019 Wrestler of the Year—another first for an NXT competitor ... All these superlatives illustrate what fans have long known about the leader of The Undisputed Era: He's a gifted competitor who has mastered the varied dimensions of pro wrestling like few others have by the age of 30 ... But where does he go from here? Vince McMahon's long-established prejudices against smaller wrestlers could hinder him on *Raw* or *Smackdown* ... He would seem a perfect fit for AEW, where his girlfriend, Britt Baker, seems to be having the time of her life.

CHRIS JERICO

03

PATH TO
NUMBER 3

42 IN 1996
26 IN 1997
10 IN 1998
29 IN 1999
09 IN 2000
09 IN 2001
04 IN 2002
05 IN 2003
10 IN 2004
25 IN 2005
29 IN 2008
02 IN 2009
05 IN 2010
29 IN 2012
25 IN 2013
55 IN 2014
84 IN 2015
21 IN 2016
22 IN 2017

HEIGHT: 6'
WEIGHT: 227
YEARS PRO: 30
2019 RANK: NL



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TOP FIVE MOMENTS
DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Knocked out Adam Page with his Judas Effect elbow at All Out on August 31, 2019, to become the inaugural AEW World champion.
2. Used his Liontamer submission hold to beat Cody Rhodes at September's Full Gear event after Rhodes' corner-man (MJF) threw in the towel.
3. Again pulled out the Liontamer to beat Japanese legend Hiroshi Tanahashi by submission during night two of NJPW's Wrestle Kingdom in January.
4. Earned yet another key submission victory in a title defense against Scorpio Sky on the November 27 edition of *Dynamite*.
5. Successfully defended his title against Darby Allin in a Philadelphia Street Fight on October 16.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 3

It's just not supposed to be this way: A 30-year veteran—and multiple-time world champion—doing some of the best work of his career in his late 40s ... But Jericho, who turns 50 this year, finds himself with his highest *PWI* “500” ranking since 2009 when he came in second place ... Jericho's late-career resurgence is a testament to his adaptability ... What “The Demo God” has lost in speed, athleticism, and physical conditioning over the years, he's more than made up for through pacing, emotion, and storytelling ... Although he can still get airborne when the situation calls for it, Jericho has settled into a more grounded, violent, and even sadistic wrestling style ... Few grapplers have ever been more valuable to a promotion than Jericho was to AEW in its freshman year—giving the upstart brand instant credibility and a high entertainment quotient every time he was on screen ... Has similarly found late success in his music career, which has led some to wonder how committed he could be to wrestling ... But Jericho has kept a busier wrestling schedule than he has in years, and has thrown himself into his AEW gig with the enthusiasm of an athlete half his age.

DREW MCINTYRE

04

HEIGHT: 6'5"
WEIGHT: 254
YEARS PRO: 19
2019 RANK: 36

PATH TO
NUMBER 4

219 IN 2008
125 IN 2009
30 IN 2010
52 IN 2011
191 IN 2012
159 IN 2013
196 IN 2014
37 IN 2015
11 IN 2016
58 IN 2017
72 IN 2018
36 IN 2019



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TOP FIVE MOMENTS
DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Used four Claymore Kicks in just over four minutes to upend Brock Lesnar in the main event of WrestleMania 36 and capture the WWE World championship.
2. Entered the Royal Rumble match at number 16 and eliminated six participants—including WWE champ Brock Lesnar—en route to winning the match and earning a WrestleMania title shot.
3. Defeated Seth Rollins to retain his WWE championship at May's Money In The Bank event.
4. Beat Bobby Lashley in a World title match at Backlash in June.
5. Minutes after beating Lesnar for the title at WrestleMania, he made his first successful title defense against The Big Show.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 4

More than a decade after branding him as “The Chosen One,” WWE finally put its money where its mouth was and anointed McIntyre as its newest standard-bearer ... The imposing Scotsman certainly fits the mold created by Vince McMahon for WWE’s “top guy,” being tall, muscular, handsome, and athletic ... But McIntyre was all those things during his previous run with WWE, which ultimately ended in his release ... What’s different now? McIntyre said being let go by the company in 2014 helped him mature both as an athlete and a man ... Indeed, the Drew McIntyre who has plowed through his competition since January’s Royal Rumble has done so with a confidence and swagger never before displayed ... Still, it’s been difficult to judge how the McIntyre experiment is going so far, because it has come during a time when WWE is without one of its key gauges for success: fan reaction ... McIntyre’s road to his first WrestleMania main event, his championship win, and his earliest title defenses all occurred while WWE was relegated to operating out of its small Performance Center ... How will the WWE champ play in front of live crowds? It may take a while to find out ... Hopefully, McMahon doesn’t lose his patience (or interest) by then.

TETSUYA NAITO

05

HEIGHT: 5'11"
WEIGHT: 225
YEARS PRO: 15
2019 RANK: 25

PATH TO
NUMBER 5

161 IN 2009
146 IN 2010
186 IN 2011
95 IN 2012
259 IN 2013
63 IN 2014
80 IN 2015
12 IN 2016
12 IN 2017
09 IN 2018
25 IN 2019

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TOP FIVE MOMENTS
DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Defeated Kazuchika Okada on night two of Wrestle Kingdom to win his second IWGP World championship—becoming the first wrestler to hold the company's heavyweight and Intercontinental championships at the same time.
2. Beat Jay White the previous night at the Tokyo Dome to win the IWGP Intercontinental title for the fifth time.
3. Successfully defended his IWGP heavyweight title against KENTA at February's The New Beginning event in Osaka.
4. Picked up five victories in the 2019 G1 Climax tournament, including in matches against Okada, Lance Archer, Bad Luck Fale, EVIL, and Zack Sabre Jr.
5. Took out Taichi at November's Power Struggle event with his patented Destino reverse DDT finisher.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 5

After keeping a relatively low profile for much of 2019, Naito made a big splash just days into 2020 when he won two titles in two nights, completing what was dubbed his “Double Gold Dash” ... Unfortunately, COVID-19 brought Naito's momentum to a grinding halt, as NJPW closed up shop for months for safety precautions ... When the company finally did resume live events in June, Naito remained on the sidelines, waiting for his next contender to emerge from the New Japan Cup tournament ... Sadly, his dreams of a long reign as double-champion were cut short, as he would lose both the IWGP World and Intercontinental titles to that tournament's winner, EVIL, at NJPW Dominion on July 14 of this year ... Still, many fans are clamoring to see a rematch between Okada and Naito ... With two wins over the “The Rainmaker” during the evaluation period, Naito might be the betting favorite when the two future legends do meet again ... Before Orange Cassidy made it chic here in the U.S., Naito was mastering the art of not giving a damn—and winning over fans in the process.

KAZUCHIKA OKADA

06

HEIGHT: 6'3"
WEIGHT: 236
YEARS PRO: 16
2019 RANK: 5

PATH TO NUMBER 6

230 IN 2010
286 IN 2011
40 IN 2012
05 IN 2013
05 IN 2014
27 IN 2015
02 IN 2016
01 IN 2017
03 IN 2018
05 IN 2019



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TOP FIVE MOMENTS DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Defeated G1 Climax tournament winner Kota Ibushi to retain the IWGP World heavyweight championship in the main event of Wrestle Kingdom night one.
2. Successfully defended his IWGP title against SAN-ADA at October's King of Pro Wrestling event in Tokyo.
3. Put away Minoru Suzuki with his trademark Rainmaker clothesline finisher for another successful title defense in London, England, in August of last year.
4. Won seven matches in the 2020 G1 Climax tournament, including against Hiroshi Tanahashi, Will Ospreay, and Zack Sabre Jr.
5. Beat Gedo in the first round of the 2020 New Japan Cup tournament and Yuji Nagata in the second round to advance to the quarterfinals.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 6

There's a good chance that, by the time you read this, Okada is on his sixth reign as IWGP World heavyweight champion ... But even if he's not, make no mistake: "The Rainmaker" is still *the man* in New Japan ... Having already cemented his place on the Mount Rushmore of *puroresu* greats, Okada is on a mission to eclipse the accomplishments of all his NJPW predecessors ... The numbers don't lie: five IWGP heavyweight title reigns, 30 total defenses, seven Tokyo Dome New Year's main events, and a long list of classic performances that wouldn't fit on this page ... And he's only 32 years old ... In 2017, became the first Japanese wrestler to rank number one in the *PWI* "500" ... Arsenal is far less flashy than that of many of his NJPW contemporaries, but every move is delivered with perfect timing, precision, and grace ... Student of Ultimo Dragon said his forced downtime during the COVID-19 pandemic only reaffirmed his love of pro wrestling ... "It's weird, right? Most normal people would never enjoy doing something that hurts so much," Okada said in a New Japan interview. "But my life is in that ring."

CODY RHODES

07

PATH TO NUMBER 7

172 IN 2007
79 IN 2008
48 IN 2009
41 IN 2010
35 IN 2011
23 IN 2012
53 IN 2013
82 IN 2014
65 IN 2015
111 IN 2016
33 IN 2017
08 IN 2018
15 IN 2019



HEIGHT: 6'1"
WEIGHT: 215
YEARS PRO: 14
2019 RANK: 15



PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

TOP FIVE MOMENTS DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Beat Shawn Spears, Darby Allin, and Lance Archer in successive tournament matches to become AEW's first TNT champion.
2. Pinned Wardlow in a high-stakes steel cage match on November 19 after connecting with a moonsault off the top of the structure.
3. Defeated former ally Shawn Spears in a grudge match at 2019's All Out event after hitting him with his Cross Rhodes finisher.
4. Beat Sammy Guevara in the first match of the first episode of AEW *Dynamite*.
5. Defeated Darby Allin in the Homecoming edition of *Dynamite* in Jacksonville, Florida, on New Year's Day.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 7

He may not be the single best technician in the sport, have the most impressive win-loss record, or compete as often as many other wrestlers ... But, in one key criterion, "The American Nightmare" leaves everyone else on this list in the dust: "influence on the sport" ... As a co-founder and executive vice president of All Elite Wrestling, the second-generation star has served both as the public face of AEW and as a mover and shaker behind the scenes ... This is not to say that Rhodes isn't a tremendous performer in the ring, as well ... His epic clash with big brother Dustin pulled at fans' heartstrings like few other bouts in recent years, and was chosen as 2019's Match of the Year by *PWI* readers ... His subsequent battles with Shawn Spears, Chris Jericho, and MJF were similarly driven by emotion and nuanced storytelling—two of Cody's strongest suits, which he no doubt inherited from his dad, "The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes ... The newly-established TNT title seems tailor-made for Cody, who gets to hold a high-profile position as a singles champion, despite having forfeited future world title opportunities ... From his entrance with his "Nightmare Family" entourage, to his rugged good looks, to his devastating finisher, Cody Rhodes is the embodiment of a polished pro wrestling act.

SETH ROLLINS

08

HEIGHT: 6'1"
WEIGHT: 217
YEARS PRO: 12
2019 RANK: 1

PATH TO NUMBER 8

88 IN 2008
17 IN 2009
19 IN 2010
53 IN 2011
46 IN 2012
35 IN 2013
12 IN 2014
01 IN 2015
08 IN 2016
16 IN 2017
05 IN 2018
01 IN 2019

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TOP FIVE MOMENTS DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Using three stomps, toppled Brock Lesnar for the Universal championship for the second time in five months at SummerSlam 2019.
2. Retained his Universal title in a championship defense against Braun Strowman at September's Clash of Champions event.
3. Partnered with Becky Lynch to win a mixed tag team match against Baron Corbin and Lacey Evans in which both his Universal title and Lynch's Raw Women's title were on the line at Extreme Rules.
4. Teamed with Strowman to capture the Raw tag team championship from Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows in August.
5. Won the Raw tag title again in January, teaming with Buddy Murphy to defeat The Viking Raiders.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 8

Last year's number-one ranked wrestler suffered some big setbacks during the evaluation period, but remains on the short list of major threats to the WWE World title ... Was riding high as a world champion until becoming involved in a disastrous feud with Bray Wyatt last fall that ended with him losing his title, along with much of his credibility ... After months of fighting off his detractors, decided late last year to lean into fans' boos with his new "Monday Night Messiah" character ... The cult leader persona has been hit-or-miss so far, and did not keep him from losing high-profile matches against Kevin Owens at WrestleMania and against WWE champion Drew McIntyre at Money In The Bank ... With his fiancé Becky Lynch expecting their first child in December, Rollins could gain some needed perspective on what's truly important in life, and put to rest, for good, the defensiveness and petulant remarks in interviews and on social media that first caused fans to turn on him ... On this point, even his naysayers should agree: Bell-to-bell, few in wrestlers in WWE—or anywhere—are better.

KOFI KINGSTON

09

HEIGHT: 6'
WEIGHT: 212
YEARS PRO: 15
2019 RANK: 4

PATH TO
NUMBER 9

76 IN 2008
35 IN 2009
26 IN 2010
29 IN 2011
31 IN 2012
20 IN 2013
59 IN 2014
52 IN 2015
42 IN 2016
69 IN 2017
82 IN 2018
04 IN 2019

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TOP FIVE MOMENTS
DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Nailed Randy Orton with his Trouble in Paradise kick to get the pin in a Clash of Champions WWE World title defense.
2. Defeated Samoa Joe in another successful WWE championship defense at Extreme Rules in July 2019.
3. Beat U.S. titleholder AJ Styles in a Champion vs. Champion bout on the July 30, 2019, edition of *Smackdown*.
4. Teamed with New Day partner Big E to win the group's seventh tag team title on November 8 in Manchester, England, beating The Revival.
5. Successfully defended the Smackdown tag team title with Big E in a fatal four-way match against The Forgotten Sons, The Miz and John Morrison, and Lucha House Party at May's Money In The Bank event.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 9

WWE veteran wore world championship gold for about a quarter of the evaluation period, between July and October ... After his triumphant title win at last year's WrestleMania, Kingston was enjoying quite the Cinderella story, until Brock Lesnar turned his carriage back into a pumpkin in just nine seconds ... As deflating as Kingston's one-sided world title defeat was, fans could take solace in knowing that the inspiring grappler had proven he has what it takes to hang in the main event singles scene—to which he could certainly return some day ... Wasted no time in refocusing his efforts on his tag team career with his New Day comrades, and before long picked up his 10th and 11th tag team championships ... That's just one reign shy of Edge's record for the most tag titles held by a single WWE wrestler ... During a particularly critical time in U.S. history for racial justice, wrestling's first African-born world champion has embraced his role as a representative for Black Americans in wrestling, and has discussed social justice issues at length on The New Day's podcast, *Feel the Power*.

AJ STYLES

10

HEIGHT: 5'11"
WEIGHT: 218
YEARS PRO: 22
2019 RANK: 3



PATH TO NUMBER 10

458 IN 2000
199 IN 2001
70 IN 2002
11 IN 2003
08 IN 2004
07 IN 2005
13 IN 2006
32 IN 2007
21 IN 2008
19 IN 2009
01 IN 2010
24 IN 2011
28 IN 2012
28 IN 2013
04 IN 2014
04 IN 2015
04 IN 2016
02 IN 2017
02 IN 2018
03 IN 2019

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TOP FIVE MOMENTS DURING EVALUATION PERIOD:

1. Won two tournament matches—against Shinsuke Nakamura and Daniel Bryan—this spring to win the vacant Intercontinental championship (his first reign with the title).
2. Beat Ricochet to win the United States championship for the third time at Extreme Rules.
3. Retained his title in a rematch against Ricochet at SummerSlam, finishing him off with the Styles Clash.
4. Successfully defended the U.S. title against Humberto Carrillo at the Crown Jewel event in Saudi Arabia on Halloween.
5. Defeated Cedric Alexander in another title defense at the Clash of Champions show in September of last year.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 10

Even during what was probably his least remarkable 12-month stretch since he arrived in WWE four years ago, Styles' consistently excellent performances in the ring were enough to allow him to crack the top 10 ... Four-month reign as U.S. champion early in the evaluation period included relatively few wins, and a whole lot of disqualification losses ... Although it ended in a high-profile defeat, one of the proudest moments of "The Phenomenal One's" storied career came earlier this year, when The Undertaker hand-picked Styles as his opponent for what he said was likely his last match ever ... The cinematic Boneyard Match at WrestleMania 36 was widely praised for its originality and entertainment value ... Despite being (literally) buried in the match, Styles has shown plenty of life since returning to the ring weeks later, including in the men's Money In The Bank ladder match, and in the Intercontinental championship tournament that he went on to win ... A Universal championship program—perhaps against Braun Strowman—appears inevitable ... Until then, the IC title scene is a good fit for Styles, who, in the great tradition of former title holders like Tito Santana, Bret Hart, and Curt Hennig, is primed to steal every show on which he's included ... As a testament to his consistency over the last ten years, Styles was voted Wrestler of the Decade by *PWI* readers.

***11. KEITH LEE** (6'2", 320, 15, 157) Signed with NXT in 2018, but truly arrived late last year ... Held his own in a toe-to-toe showdown with Brock Lesnar at the Royal Rumble ... Beat Roderick Strong in January for the North American title ... Became a double champ by beating Adam Cole for the NXT title shortly after the evaluation period.

12. BROCK LESNAR (6'3", 286, 20, NL) Wrestling's most dominant force added two more world titles to his trophy case over the evaluation period, beating Seth Rollins at last year's Extreme Rules for the Universal title, and Kofi Kingston in October for the WWE championship ... The two matches totaled 23 seconds ... Lost both those titles ... Future in WWE is, once again, uncertain.

13. KENNY OMEGA (6', 228, 18, 8) The former number-one ranked wrestler wears two major titles, as one-half of the AEW tag team champions with Adam Page and as AAA's Mega champion, having beaten Rey Fenix in October ... Appears to be biding his time until choosing to make a serious run at the AEW World title held by Jon Moxley, to whom he lost in November.

14. ROMAN REIGNS (6'3", 265, 10, 7) WWE's "Big Dog" hasn't spent much time in the yard as of late ... Pulled out of a WrestleMania Universal title match because of COVID-19 concerns ... As sole survivor, lead Team Smackdown to victory at Survivor Series ... Was also the last person eliminated from the men's Royal Rumble match.

15. NICK ALDIS (6'3", 240, 17, 41) The "National Treasure" has been the key ingredient in the success of Billy Corgan's rebooted NWA ... As heavyweight champion since October of 2018, has defended the "Ten Pounds of Gold" against the likes of James Storm, Ricky Morton, and Flip Gordon ... On the mic, in the ring, and in front of a mirror: as classy as they come.

16. BRAY WYATT (6'3", 285, 11, 169) As the nightmarish "Fiend," was almost cartoonishly unstoppable for the first half of the evaluation period ... Defeated Seth Rollins for the Universal title in October, and retained it in defenses against Daniel Bryan at Survivor Series and the Royal Rumble ... Beat John Cena in a Firefly Fun House Match at WrestleMania (we think).

17. KOTA IBUSHI (5'11", 200, 16, 17) Immensely popular NJPW star achieved new heights by headlining Wrestle Kingdom in a losing effort against IWGP World champ Okada ... Earned the opportunity by winning the 2019 G1 Climax tournament, in which he scored eight victories, including against Okada ... Partnered with Hiroshi Tanahashi to win the IWGP tag team title in February.

18. RUSH (6', 225, 13, 137) Mexican luchador has become a top attraction in Ring of Honor, where he won the heavyweight title twice during the evaluation period ... Successfully defended the title against Silas Young and Jeff Cobb ... In December, created "La Facción Ingobernable"—an ROH spinoff of the internationally successful Los Ingobernables faction.

19. BRAUN STROWMAN (6'8", 385, 6, 27) WWE's "Monster Among Men" stepped in at the 11th hour to replace Roman Reigns at WrestleMania, and beat Goldberg to become the Universal champion ... Successfully defended the title against Bray Wyatt and in a handicap match against The Miz and John Morrison ... Still very much a work in progress.

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20. JACOB FATU (6'2", 320, 15, 306) Member of the revered Anoa'i-Fatu wrestling clan sky-rockets up this list on the strength of a dominant run in Major League Wrestling ... Has worn the MLW title since beating Tom Lawlor in July of 2019 ... Retained the belt against LA Park in the main event of MLW's first pay-per-view, Saturday Night SuperFight, in November.

21. WILL OSPREAY (6'1", 190, 8, 10) Exciting Englishman has been gradually transforming his style (and his body) over the last two years ... Officially made the move to NJPW's heavyweight division in February after defeating Zack Sabre Jr. for the Revolution Pro British heavyweight title ... Third reign with the IWGP junior heavyweight title ended in January.

22. MAXWELL JACOB FRIEDMAN (5'11", 216, 5, 135) MJF has quietly cemented his place as a top contender to the AEW World title, having not lost a singles match in the company yet ... Maybe "quietly" isn't the right word ... Betrayed best friend Cody in November, then beat him at February's Revolution pay-per-view ... Despicable.

23. ALEISTER BLACK (5'11", 215, 18, 34) The Brooding Dutchman has beaten most anyone who has dared knock on his door ... Scored a big win against Bobby Lashley at WrestleMania ... Was rumored to have been a favorite of ousted Raw creative head Paul Heyman, so it remains to be seen what his future has in store without "Paul E." in power.

24. KENTO MIYAHARA (6'1", 224, 12, 24) Fourth run as All Japan's Triple Crown champion spanned more than 500 days, before coming to an end in March at the hands of Suwama ... With his win against Yuma Aoyagi in February, tied the record for most Triple Crown title defenses, at ten ... AJPW may not be what it once was, but Miyahara is as gifted a star as it's ever had.

***25. WALTER** (6'4", 310, 14, 14) WWE's longest-reigning current champion has held the NXT U.K. title since April 5, 2019

... Defended the title against Dave Mastiff and Joe Coffey ... Also held the Progress Unified title ... With the NXT U.K. brand ranking low on WWE's priority list, the Austrian big man's momentum has stalled.

26. SHINSUKE NAKAMURA (6'2", 229, 18, 31) Has settled into a mid-card role in WWE after once being among the hottest wrestling acts on the globe ... Still, he held the Intercontinental title for more than 200 days—the longest reign in 17 years ... Joined forces with Sami Zayn and Cesaro in a faction known as The Artist Collective.

27. ANDRADE (5'9", 210, 17, 68) "El Idolo" has picked up some steam since jumping to WWE's Raw brand in October ... In December, beat Rey Mysterio at an untelevised event at Madison Square Garden to capture the U.S. title ... Second-generation competitor should soon be part of another famous wrestling family, as he is engaged to Charlotte Flair.

28. JAY WHITE (6'1", 220, 7, 12) NJPW's "Switchblade" rebounded from losing his IWGP World title by winning the Intercontinental title in September, then holding it for over 3 months ... Also advanced to the finals of the 2019 G1 Climax after winning five straight matches ... This former Bullet Club leader has an unlimited upside.



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29. RODERICK STRONG (5'10", 200, 19, 82) NXT competitor's experience has been invaluable to his Undisputed Era faction ... Defeated Velveteen Dream for the North American title in September and held it for four months ... Beat Intercontinental champ Shinsuke Nakamura and U.S. champ AJ Styles in a triple-threat match at Survivor Series.

30. TOMMASO CIAMPA (5'11", 210, 15, 13) The former NXT champion is as sadistic as ever, but is now embraced by fans for his toughness ... Executed one of the most insane maneuvers ever at War Games in November when he delivered an Air Raid Crash on Adam Cole off of the top of a cage through two tables ... Scored the pin afterward.

31. PCO (6'1", 290, 33, 71) The "French-Canadian Frankenstein" achieved a lifelong goal at the age of 51 by capturing a major heavyweight championship: the Ring of Honor title, which he won from Rush in December ... Successfully defended the title against Dragon Lee ... First appeared on the *PWI* "500" in 1993, ranking at #232.

32. DANIEL BRYAN (5'10", 210, 20, 2) Shortly after coming in second place in last year's *PWI* "500," the former "Planet's Champion" reignited his love affair with fans ... Unsuccessfully challenged for the Universal championship at Survivor Series and Royal Rumble ... Made it to the finals of the Intercontinental championship tournament in May.

33. ADAM PAGE (6'1", 214, 12, 44) Alcohol-fueled "Hangman" came within a hair of becoming the inaugural AEW World champion, but lost to Chris Jericho at All Out ... Uneasy alliance with Kenny Omega was strong enough for the duo to capture the tag team championship in January ... Has been known to partake in "cowboy [stuff]," including chasing enemies on horseback.

***34. BANDIDO** (5'7", 183, 9, 81) Masked flyer has been a revelation for fans in ROH, where he is one-third of the six-man tag team champion Mexa Squad ... Also holds the PWG title, after ending Jeff Cobb's lengthy reign in December, and The Crash heavyweight title, which he won from Rey Horus.

PHOTO BY MIKEY NOLAN



35. FINN BALOR (5'11", 190, 20, 19) Although some may have seen it as a demotion, the inaugural WWE Universal champion's return to NXT has breathed new life into his career ... Has wins over Johnny Gargano and Damian Priest ... With the latter win, set a record for most TakeOver victories (11) ... Wore the Intercontinental title early in the evaluation period.

36. KAITO KIYOMIYA (5'11", 216, 4, 64) Young NOAH star is well on his way to becoming Japanese wrestling's next household name ... Wore the GHC heavyweight title for more than a year before losing it to Go Shiozaki in January ... After one recent win over Rene Dupree, challenged NJPW megastar Okada to an inter-promotional dream match.

37. KEVIN OWENS (6', 266, 19, 40) Once one of the sport's most sinister villains, "KO" has become the unlikely moral compass of WWE ... Beat Seth Rollins in one of WrestleMania's wildest, most entertaining bouts ... Despite his lifelong love of wrestling, has made it abundantly clear that his family comes first.

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTHA/AEW



38. HIROSHI TANAHASHI (5'11", 230, 21, 9) Whenever it seems time to write him off, NJPW's longtime "Ace" goes and wins another championship ... Teamed with Kota Ibushi to capture his third IWGP title as "The Golden Aces" ... Also briefly wore the RevPro British heavyweight title after beating Zack Sabre Jr. last August ... Can tug at fans' heartstrings like few others.

***39. PAC** (5'8", 194, 16, 66) Repugnant baddie has thrived in AEW ... Made his debut as a late substitution for Jon Moxley against Kenny Omega at All Out 2019 and won ... Also scored a key victory over Adam Page ... Formed a trio dubbed The Death Triangle with Rey Fenix and Pentagon Jr.

40. HIROMU TAKAHASHI (5'7", 202, 8, NL) After being away from the ring for a year and a half because of a broken neck, colorful NJPW star returned late last year and quickly captured his third junior heavyweight title ... Pinned Jushin Liger in "Thunder's" retirement match in January ... Made it to the semi-finals of the 2020 New Japan Cup.

41. BARON CORBIN (6'8", 285, 8, 39) Widely despised WWE competitor won the 2019 King of the Ring tournament ... Feuded with Roman Reigns through the fall and winter, and beat him in a TLC match in December ... One of wrestling's most hotly debated questions: Does Corbin have the right kind of heel heat?

42. SUWAMA (6'2", 265, 16, 90) All Japan stalwart won the Triple Crown heavyweight championship for a record seventh time in March ... Also holds the AJPW tag team championship as one-

half of the Violent Giants with Shuji Ishikawa ... The duo memorably won the Real World Tag League tournament in December.

43. REY MYSTERIO (5'6", 175, 31, 53) Ageless masked man remains near the top of the cards as a gatekeeper to WWE's main event scene ... Wore the U.S. title for a month ... Gave Brock Lesnar a run for his money in a Survivor Series WWE title match ... Violent feud with Seth Rollins has involved Mysterio's son Dominik.

44. BOBBY LASHLEY (6'3", 273, 21, 30) WWE powerhouse started building momentum after taking on MVP as a manager, leading to an unsuccessful WWE championship challenge at Backlash ... Stole Rusev's wife, Lana, away from him before getting the better of him in a heated feud ... In his mid-40s, but shows no signs of slowing down.

45. MATT TAVEN (6'2", 218, 12, 37) Cocky Beantown native wore the ROH heavyweight title for six months before losing it to Rush in September ... Successfully defended the title against Alex Shelley and Volador Jr. ... Also saw action in Mexico's CMLL ... Underwent ankle surgery and knee surgery during ROH's pandemic shutdown.

46. JOHNNY GARGANO (5'10", 199, 15, 6) The former NXT champ has suffered a number of setbacks over the last year, including some high-profile losses against Adam Cole, Finn Balor, and Keith Lee ... Did score an important victory over longtime frenemy Tommaso Ciampa in an hour-long cinematic clash dubbed "One Final Beat" ... A fine villain, but born to play the hero.

47. GO SHIOZAKI (6', 243, 16, 156) NOAH headliner won his fourth GHC heavyweight title from Kaito Kiyomiya in January ... Retained the title in a memorable empty-arena match against Kazuyuki Fujita that saw both men stare each other down for a half-hour ... Also made it to the finals of the 2020 World Tag League tournament with his partner Katsuhiko Nakajima.

48. RANDY ORTON (6'5", 250, 20, 38) The veteran "Viper" ended the evaluation period by beating Edge in the best wrestling match since before dinosaurs walked the earth ... Speaking of hyperbole, the third-generation star has recently been seconded by Ric Flair, who proclaimed Orton the greatest wrestler alive ... Losses against Kofi Kingston at SummerSlam and Edge at WrestleMania would seem to contradict that.

***49. JONATHAN GRESHAM** (5'4", 175, 15, 368) Master technician has found success in ROH, where he's picked up wins against former heavyweight champions Jay Briscoe and Jay Lethal ... Teamed with Lethal to win the ROH tag team title in December ... Advanced to the finals of PWG's 2019 Battle of Los Angeles.

50. ULTIMO GUERRERO (5'8", 210, 30, 264) Three decades into his career, lucha legend is still going strong in CMLL, where he's held the heavyweight title for nearly two years ... Beat fellow Mexican icon Negro Casas in an epic hair vs. hair cage match at CMLL's 86th Anniversary Show in September ... Beat NJPW's Satoshi Kojima in January.

51. BRIAN CAGE (6', 250, 15, 48) Won a Casino Ladder Match in his AEW debut at Double or Nothing to become top contender to Jon Moxley's World title ... A torn biceps delayed his debut, encouraging whispers that he's injury prone ... Advised by Taz, reminiscent of a Brock Lesnar-Paul Heyman relationship ... Lost the Impact title to Sami Callihan last October.

52. FENIX (5'10", 164, 15, 22) Dropped 30 spots in the "500" after a career-high ranking last year

... Teams with older brother Pentagon Jr. in AEW, and has scored several singles wins—most notably over Orange Cassidy—on *Dynamite* and *Dark* broadcasts ... The Lucha Bros. still hold the AAA tag belts, though Fenix dropped the Mega title to Kenny Omega in October 2019.

53. SHINGO TAKAGI (5'10", 212, 16, 67) Emerged as NEVER openweight champion after a vicious rivalry with Hirooki Goto ... Also holds the NEVER openweight six-man title with fellow Los Ingobernables members BUSHI and EVIL—just one front in that group's war with CHAOS ... Stunned by a first-round loss to Roppongi 3K's SHO in the New Japan Cup.

54. ZACK SABRE JR. (6', 187, 16, 43) Regained the RevPro British heavyweight title from Hiroshi Tanahashi in Beppu, Japan, and later lost it to Will Ospreay in London ... Compiled a mixed record in tag team and six-man action as a member of New Japan's Suzuki-gun ... Captured the IWGP tag title with Taichi just after the evaluation period ended.

55. DARBY ALLIN (5'8", 180, 5, 394) His Philadelphia Street Fight against AEW champion Chris Jericho was a highlight ... Had hard-fought matches against Cody Rhodes and Jon Moxley ... Successfully defended the NEW title against Rabbi Swissa last December in Tel Aviv ... During the #SpeakingOut movement, was anonymously accused of emotional abuse of a past partner ... Had not yet commented at press time.

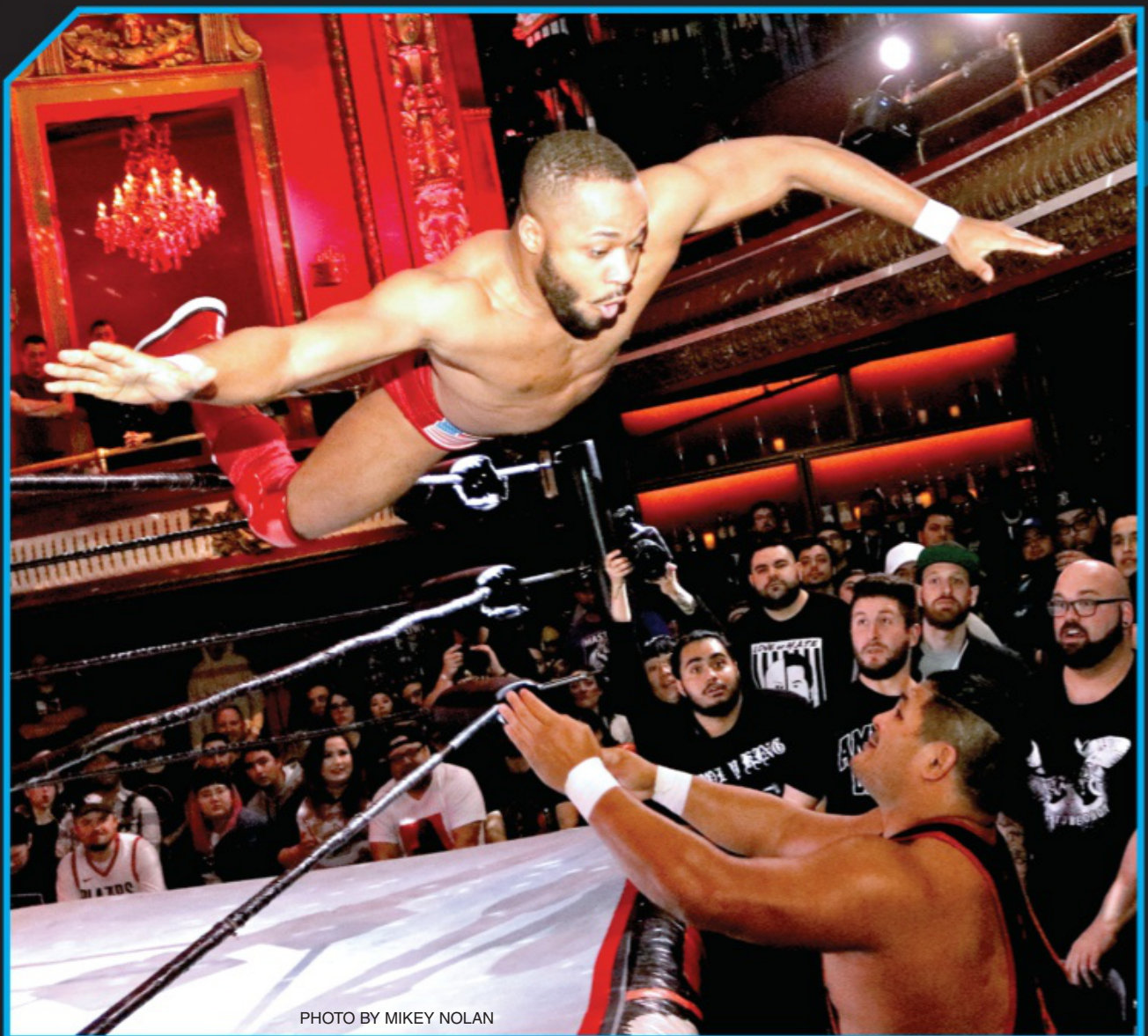


PHOTO BY MIKEY NOLAN

PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD



56. RICOCHET (5'10", 188, 16, 21) Dominated the OC's Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows and kept pace with AJ Styles last year ... A win over Seth Rollins and Bobby Lashley led to a bout against WWE champ Brock Lesnar at Super ShowDown ... Has struggled in the COVID era, due to his lackluster partnership with Cedric Alexander and a recent high-profile loss to Lashley.

57. SAMI CALLIHAN (5'8", 207, 14, 142) Finally achieved his goal of becoming Impact champion, beating Brian Cage on October 25 in Windsor, Ontario ... Lost the belt to archrival Tessa Blanchard only five weeks later ... Beat Rhino in tough street-fights in Pennsylvania and Michigan ... Played mind games with Ken Shamrock ... Struggled more in AAW than Impact.

58. KENTA (5'9", 187, 20, NL) Made his New Japan debut in the 2019 G1 Climax, compiling a three-match winning streak before losing to IWGP champ Kazuchika Okada ... Turned on CHAOS to join Bullet Club ... Held the NEVER openweight title for 127 days ... Unsuccessfully challenged NJPW double-champ Tetsuya Naito ... Previously Hideo Itami in WWE.

59. LANCE ARCHER (6'8", 264, 20, 282) Recovered from K.E.S. partner Davey Boy Smith Jr.'s exit to beat Juice Robinson for the IWGP U.S. title, but lost the belt to Jon Moxley in a Texas Death Match at Wrestle Kingdom 14 ... Hopes to parlay his

New Japan success into stateside stardom in AEW ... Managed by Jake Roberts ... It's now or never for the agile big man.

60. DREW GULAK (6', 193, 15, 87) Defended the WWE cruiserweight title against Kushida at EVOLVE 134 in Chicago ... Lost the belt to Lio Rush on October 9 ... Suffered losses to Kalisto, Lince Dorado, Mustafa Ali, and Shorty G at Smackdown events ... Buoyed by his friendship with Daniel Bryan, with recent upsets over Shinsuke Nakamura and AJ Styles to his credit.

61. SAMMY GUEVARA (5'11", 189, 9, 381) Made history by giving Cody Rhodes a hard-fought match in

the opener of AEW *Dynamite*'s October 2 premiere ... Founding member of The Inner Circle, frequently teaming with leader Chris Jericho, who dubbed him a "Spanish God" ... Underwent a suspension and sensitivity training for offensive comments about Sasha Banks ... Returned to TV in late July.

62. TAKASHI SUGIURA (5'10", 229, 20, 134) Defeated Michael Elgin to become the first GHC National champion on November 2, and retained against archrival Kaito Kiyomiya before losing to Katsuhiko Nakajima on May 9 ... Mostly teamed with members of Sugiura-gun, particularly in the Global Tag League ... Pro Wrestling NOAH legend recently turned 50.

***63. AJ GRAY** (5'10", 240, 5, NL) Won the Game Changer Wrestling title from hardcore specialist Nick Gage on December 12 in Nashville ... Feuded with Rickey Shane Page ... Turns heads nationwide with his blend of strikes, power moves, and daredevil dives ... Retained his BLP Midwest title against Alexander Hammerstone, then lost it to Kylie Rae.

64. JAMES STORM (6', 230, 23, NL) Experienced a career resurgence in the NWA, where he traded the National title with Colt Cabana, challenged heavyweight champion Nick Aldis in a best-of-three-falls bout at Into the Fire, and held the tag belts with Eli Drake ... Beat Afa Jr. at a USA Pro card in Orlando ... Settled into his comfortable role as a beer-drinking fan favorite.



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65. SHANE TAYLOR (6'1", 350, 13, 253) Defended the ROH TV title against too many undercard wrestlers ... Yet shined in four-way matches, particularly at last year's Death Before Dishonor, against Ryu Lee, Flip Gordon, and Tracy Williams ... Ultimately lost the belt to Lee at Final Battle ... Victorious in a brutal hardcore match against Nick Gage in Texas.

66. NARUKI DOI (5'8", 180, 20, 281) Defeated Ben-K for the Open the Dream Gate title on December 15 in Fukuoka, Japan ... Successfully defended against Kzy and Susumu Yokosuka ... Lost to Eita in the King of Gate 2020 tournament final ... Wrestled a very hectic schedule of tag team bouts this year ... Top moves include the Muscular Bomb and Bakatare Sliding Kick.

67. NICK GAGE (5'10", 200, 22, 398) Lost the Game Changer Wrestling title to AJ Gray on December 18 in Nashville, ending his record reign at 722 days ... Greatest win was the self-titled "Nick Gage Invitational," where he beat Mance Warner, Alex Colon, and Yuko Miyamoto in the four-way final ... Enjoying a renaissance moment after years of legal and personal turmoil.

68. WILLIE MACK (5'10", 280, 14, 136) Claimed the Impact X division title after defeating Ace Austin on April 21 at Rebellion in Nashville ... His blend of powerhouse and risk-taking styles is effective in that division ... Momentum with tag partner Rich Swann ended

of invincibility diminished further with losses to Tom Lawlor and, later, to Jon Moxley in his AEW debut ... His grappling experience in the Olympics and Japan, along with his barrel-chested physique, still make him a hot prospect.

71. TOMOHIRO ISHII (5'7", 220, 23, 73) Dropped the NEVER openweight title to KENTA at NJPW's Royal Quest event in London last August ... Teamed with fellow members of CHAOS, including Hirooki Goto ... He and YOSHI-HASHI placed fourth in the 2019 World Tag League ... Failed to regain the openweight title from Shingo Takagi.

72. CARA NOIR (6', 198, 5, NL) Enjoyed a breakthrough year in Europe ... Defeated Marius Al-Ani, Jeff Cobb, Eddie Kingston, and Mike Bailey to win the WXW 16 Carat Gold Tournament ... Won the PROGRESS title in a four-way back in January ... Defended his title against Chris Brookes and Mark Andrews ... The "Black Swan" makes a spectacular entrance.

73. MATT JACKSON (5'10", 172, 16, 75) The Young Bucks failed to win the AEW tag team belts despite all the titles they've held throughout the world ... They were bested by Santana and Ortiz, Private Party, and tag champs Kenny Omega and Adam Page ... Their popularity remains very high, however ... Defeated younger brother Nick in a falls-count-anywhere match on an April episode of *Being the Elite*.

after Swann broke his ankle ... His backstory and body type are inspiring a new generation of performers.

***69. OTIS** (5'10", 330, 5, 179) Achieved his greatest victory, winning the Money In The Bank ladder match on May 10 ... Gained experience in singles action, in addition to teaming with Tucker and Mandy Rose ... Failed to win the Smackdown tag title, but did find romance ... Became the breakout star of Smackdown ... Panned by critics, adored by fans.

70. JEFF COBB (5'10", 263, 11, 23) Lost the PWG title to Bandido on December 20 in Los Angeles ... His aura

74. PENTAGON JR. (5'11", 207, 10, 28) He and younger brother Fenix comprise The Lucha Bros. ... They retained the AAA tag team title against The Young Bucks at last year's All Out and against Santana and Ortiz at AAA's Lucha Invades New York ... Won the Lucha Fighter Tournament in Mexico City in April ... Technically amazing with a vicious streak.

75. NICK JACKSON (5'10", 178, 16, 76) Went on hiatus after The Inner Circle attacked him in March ... The Young Bucks failed to win the AEW tag belts ... Found Private Party to be the ultimate dance partners ... Thriving financially and creatively, although their AEW commitments limit their global influence ... Nick lost a falls-count-anywhere match to older brother Matt.

76. RYU LEE (5'7", 165, 7, 57) Made history in defeating Jushin Liger in his farewell bout at Wrestle Kingdom 14 ... Also known as Dragon Lee in ROH, where he defeated Shane Taylor for the TV title at Final Battle ... Lost matches to AAA Mega champ Kenny Omega and ROH champ PCO ... Competed in 2019's PWG Battle of Los Angeles, prompting his firing from CMLL.

77. EFFY (6'2", 229, 5, NL) Held several indie belts, including the Florida-based FEST Wrestling title for five months ... Received positive press for being an openly queer wrestler, particularly in Austin, Texas, where he beat Ricky Starks for the Inspire Pro Pure Prestige title ... Somewhat of a traditionalist in the ring, he counts Dusty Rhodes and Harley Race among his heroes.

***78. KYLIE RAE** (5'5", 145, 4, NL) Made an appearance in Bound for Glory's "Call Your Shot" gauntlet match, where the massive Mahabali Shera eliminated her ... Scored four wins and no singles losses on *Impact Wrestling* ... Earned victories over Ethan Page for the Freelance Wrestling title in Chicago as well as AJ Gray for the BLP Midwest belt in Crown Point, Indiana.

79. REY HORUS (5'9", 165, 13, 333) Teamed with Bandido and Flamita to defeat Villain Enterprises for the ROH six-man title at Center Stage in At-

lanta ... Not as successful in ROH singles action ... Incidentally, Horus lost The Crash heavyweight title to Bandido last year ... Had defeated MLW National openweight champ Alexander Hammerstone the previous month.

80. MATT RIDDLE (6'2", 216, 5, 69) Teamed with Pete Dunne to win the Dusty Rhodes Classic and beat Bobby Fish and Kyle O'Reilly for the NXT belts ... Feud with Timothy Thatcher began with Thatcher joining him as tag champs ... Prior to his Smackdown debut, Riddle was accused of sexual assault by a former partner during the #Speaking-Out movement ... He's since denied the accusation.

81. PETE DUNNE (5'10", 205, 15, 54) He and Matt Riddle defeated The Grizzled Young Veterans to win the Dusty Rhodes Classic, then went on to beat Bobby Fish and Kyle O'Reilly for the NXT tag team belts ... Detained in the U.K. due to COVID-19 restrictions, Dunne forfeited his half of the title ... Beat Cara Noir at PROGRESS Chapter 95 in London.

82. APOLLO CREWS (6'1", 240, 11, 130) Scored four straight WWE house-show wins over Andrade to kick off the evaluation period ... Floundered on *Smackdown*, even teaming with Shorty G to lose a handicap match to Sheamus ... Reborn on *Raw*, where he again beat Andrade, this time for the U.S. title ... Sure to learn from rivalries with MVP and Shelton Benjamin.



PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD

***83. TESSA BLANCHARD** (5'5", 125, 6, NL) With her Impact title win over Sami Callihan, Blanchard became the first woman to hold the top belt of a major TV promotion ... Faced more men than women in Impact ... Her inability to come to terms with Impact, being stripped of her title as a result, and claims about her alleged racist and bullying behavior have dimmed her star-power.

84. ORANGE CASSIDY (5'10", 161, 16, 224) Enjoying his best year in the sport, thanks to his exposure in AEW ... Lost a hard-fought match to PAC at Revolution ... Teamed with Best Friends to defeat Jake Hager, Santana, and Ortiz ... Chris Jericho bludgeoned him with a bag of oranges ... That led to an epic match against Jericho on *Dynamite's* "Fyter Fest" special.

85. SANADA (6', 220, 13, 42) Avenged a loss to IWGP champ Kazuchika Okada by defeating him in the G1 Climax, where he scored four wins and five losses ... Lost another title match to Okada at King of Pro Wrestling ... He and EVIL lost to David Finlay and Juice Robinson in the World Tag League final ... Lost a close one to EVIL in the semifinals of the New Japan Cup.

86. JAY LETHAL (5'10", 225, 18, 16) Teamed with protégé Jonathan Gresham to win the ROH tag title from The Briscoe Brothers ... Lost to Gresham at last year's Death Before Dishonor ... Suffered a loss to HIW Wildside Provincial champ Bobby Sharp in Sas-

katoon ... The subject of new and old accusations of harassment, which he denied in a tweet dated July 6.

87. THE MIZ (6'2", 221, 17, 35) Losses to Tommaso Ciampa, WWE Universal champion Bray Wyatt, and IC champ Shinsuke Nakamura precipitated a heel turn ... Reunion with John Morrison led to a Smackdown tag title win over The New Day at Super ShowDown ... Lost the belts back in April ... Too bad Miz and Morrison seem content as impractical jokers on *Smackdown*.

88. MARTY SCURLL (5'9", 185, 15, 52) Headed for another showdown with NWA champ Nick Aldis before COVID-19 forced the cancelation of the Crockett Cup ... Lacks a great rival in ROH despite serving as booker ... Remains a worldwide attraction ... Named in the #SpeakingOut movement, he characterized a past incident with a minor as inappropriate but consensual.

89. DAVEY BOY SMITH JR. (6'5", 264, 21, 269) Teams frequently with Brian Pillman Jr. in MLW, and is a reliable ally of Marshall and Ross Von Erich ... Defeated Pillman in MLW's Opera Cup final last December ... Poised to challenge heavyweight champion Jacob Fatu before the COVID-19 pandemic ... No one should rule out another WWE run for this improved star.

90. VELVETEEN DREAM (6'2", 227, 6, 26) Failed to regain his momentum after a very successful eight-month NXT North American title reign ... After his loss to Roderick Strong last September, he lost a steel cage match to Strong and two matches to NXT champion Adam Cole, including a Backlot Brawl in May ... Derailed by #SpeakingOut accusations in June.



PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD/IMPACT WRESTLING

91. HUMBERTO CARRILLO (6'1", 198, 8, 359) Became an unexpected fixture on *Raw* after a breakout year ... Lost to WWE U.S. champ Andrade at the Royal Rumble and Elimination Chamber, despite beating him at some house shows ... Beat Shelton Benjamin twice in *Main Event* bouts ... A stand-up guy, helping friends such as Rey Mysterio Jr. and Aleister Black.

92. RICKY STARKS (6', 195, 7, NL) Made a surprise challenge for Cody Rhodes' AEW TNT title on the June 11 *Dynamite* ... AEW signed Starks, despite his loss to Cody ... Sometimes a smug heel, Starks became the quintessential babyface on NWA *Power* earlier in 2020, beating Trevor Murdoch in a tournament final for the TV championship ... Product of the Texas indies.

***93. JUNGLE BOY** (5'8", 175, 5, 280) Lasted 10 minutes with AEW World champ Chris Jericho in a special challenge match in December ... Had breakout match with TNT champion Cody Rhodes in May ... A member of The Jurassic Express, alongside Marko Stunt and Luchasaurus ... Compiled a poor win-loss record in AEW despite his potential ... Based in California.

94. ACE AUSTIN (5'9", 174, 5, 243) Flirted with Eddie Edwards' wife, Alisha, igniting a feud ... Highlight was his X division title win in a five-way match—also involving Tessa Blanchard, Daga, Acey Romero, and defending champ Jake Crist—at Bound for Glory... Lost the belt to Willie Mack at Rebellion ... Acts like a star ... Sometimes, Impact treats him like one.

95. DOLPH ZIGGLER (6', 218, 16, 46) Known as perhaps the sport's greatest mid-carder as he approached his 40th birthday ... Had a good run of WWE title matches with champion Kofi Kingston at Super ShowDown, Stomping Grounds, and numerous house shows ... Enjoyed a 29-day Raw tag title reign with Robert Roode ... Feuding with Mandy Rose's boyfriend, Otis.

96. KARRION KROSS (6'4", 249, 6, 121) Left Impact after losing a first-blood match to Eddie Edwards at Slammiversary ... Teamed with Los Mercenarios in a losing effort against Cody Rhodes, Psycho Clown, and Cain Velasquez at AAA's TripleMania ... Beat Tom Lawlor by DQ at MLW's Fightland ... Submitted Tommaso Ciampa at NXT TakeOver: In Your House.

97. SCORPIO SKY (5'10", 205, 18, 116) He and SCU partner Frankie Kazarian had an incredible record as AEW tag champs, retaining the belts against The Young Bucks, Private Party, and The Lucha Bros. ... Challenged Chris Jericho for the World title on November 27 ... Has a long series of singles wins on *AEW Dark* ... His mainstream success is long overdue.



PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

98. ALEXANDER HAMMERSTONE (6'3", 220, 7, 376) Seemingly invincible as MLW National Openweight champion, with successful defenses against Savio Vega, Davey Boy Smith Jr., and Aero Star ... Member of The Dynasty ... Defeated Mil Muertes for the PCW ULTRA title in January ... Competed in Pro Wrestling NOAH's N-1 Victory tourney last year.

99. LIO RUSH (5'6", 160, 6, 260) Defeated Drew Gulak for the NXT cruiserweight title on October 9 and reigned for 63 days, losing to Angel Garza ... His highlight was actually a hard-fought non-title bout against Raul Mendoza on *205 Live* ... Another top rival was Akira Tozawa ... Released from WWE in March after a sometimes-strained relationship with management.

100. JOHN MORRISON (6', 215, 18, 29) Made a strong comeback in WWE, scoring singles wins over Big E and Kofi Kingston ... Reunited with The Miz to beat The New Day for the Smackdown tag title at Super ShowDown ... Now acting as Miz' comedy sidekick ... Could possibly win the Universal belt if he went solo ... Seasoned by his eight years away from WWE.

101. BIG E (5'11", 285, 11, 72) Jovial big man had three reigns as Smackdown tag champ this year ... Won first title of period with Xavier Woods at Extreme Rules, giving New Day triple gold ... E and Kofi Kingston had second reign from November – February ... Won singles triple-threat match in April to start third reign, which carried through end of period.

102. TETSUYA ENDO (5'11", 176, 9, 124) DDT's dominant star was double champion for a brief time ... Reached finals of D-Ou Grand Prix 2019, losing to Masato Tanaka ... With Takuya Nomura, won Toshiwasure! Tag Team Tournament 2019 ... With Strong Hearts, captured KO-D six-man tag team title in March ... Won second KO-D openweight Title in June, handing Tanaka his first DDT loss.

103. MYRON REED (6'0", 172, 5, NL) 23-year-old had a breakout year in MLW ... "Hot Fire" defeated Teddy Hart for the MLW middleweight title on November 9 and reigned for rest of period ... In Glory Pro, reached the finals of the Midwest Territory Title and David Lee Memorial Tournaments ... Challenged for AAA Trios title on MLW *Fusion*.

104. DOMINIK DIJAKOVIC (6'7", 270, 7, 290) NXT monster returned from injury in July and went on immediate winning streak ... Lengthy feud with Keith Lee ended in several unsuccessful bids for the NXT North American title ... Was on winning side of War Games in November ... Did not compete in May or June amidst pandemic and rumors of move to main roster.

105. LUCHASAURUS (6'5", 235, 11, 434) One small step for man, one giant leap up the "500" for AEW's resident dinosaur ... Popular Jurassic Express was 10-3 as a team in first half of 2020 ... Defeated Christopher Daniels on 2020 Jericho Cruise ... Also had a strong year on California indie scene, and won lengthy feud with Chris Battle in NEW.

***106. WARHORSE** (5'8", 175, 7, 480) Thanks to new persona, indie standout has become a cult sensation ... Held ZERO1 USA's top title for seven months of period ... Won IWTW's Turbo Graps 16 tournament in September ... Captured IWTW Independent Wrestling title in that tournament final and reigned through end of period, with three-dozen successful defenses before COVID-19 shutdown.

107. HIROOKI GOTO (6', 227, 17, 50) CHAOS member entered NJPW G1 Climax and World Tag League (with Karl Fredericks) ... Defeated KENTA for the NEVER openweight title on night two of Wrestle Kingdom 14, then reigned for four weeks ... Challenged Jay White for the IWGP Intercontinental title at Power Struggle ... Was competing in New Japan Cup as period ended.

108. DAMIAN PRIEST (6'7", 251, 16, 166) "Archer of Infamy" was dominant on NXT live events ... Competed in #1 contender's match at TakeOver: WarGames III, and on Team NXT at Survivor Series ... Attacks on Keith Lee and Dominik Dijakovic led to three-way North American title feud ... Scrap with Finn Balor led to a loss at TakeOver: In Your House.

109. ANGEL GARZA (6', 212, 12, 258) Smooth luchador held NXT cruiserweight title for seven weeks, and proposed to his girlfriend in-ring after winning that gold ... Moved to Raw as an associate of Andrade and Zelina Vega ... Unsuccessfully challenged for Raw tag title at WrestleMania ... Tangled frequently with Kevin Owens and Apollo Crews.

110. ALLIE KAT (5'3", 128, 5, NL) Thanks to entertaining persona and impressive work ethic, "One Thicc Kitten" ranks among the most popular wrestlers on the indies ... Holds singles wins over Effy and Mance Warner in GCW ... Fell to Nick Gage in a brutal Texas Death Match ... Enjoys leveling foes with her "Laricat."



PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD

111. TOM LAWLOR (6', 205, 8, 152) UFC veteran held MLW championship for first week of period, and AIW Absolute championship for first four months ... Also held Prestige championship for entire period, and won Oregon promotion's annual Rise or Die Trying tournament in November ... Teamed with Von Erichs and Low Ki to defeat Contra Unit inside MLW's War Chamber.

112. CHRISTOPHER DANIELS (6', 224, 27, 105) "Fallen Angel" still going strong after 50th birthday ... Was 9-3 while teaming with SCU mates ... Scored singles wins over Sonny Kiss and Serpentico ... Competed on all three nights of action during Jericho Cruise ... Reached the final of DEFY's Super 8XGP Tournament ... Daniels and Kazarian were FTR's second opponents in AEW.

113. FRANKIE KAZARIAN (6'1", 225, 22, 113) Kazarian and Scorpio Sky were crowned AEW's first tag champs, reigning for nearly three months ... Kazarian was 24-9 overall in tandems with SCU mates ... Competed in Double or Nothing Casino Ladder Match and Under The Limit Battle Royal ... As a single, faced Adam Page on Jericho Cruise and Jon Moxley on *Dynamite*.

114. MURPHY (5'11", 227, 13, 33) Former cruiserweight champ had middling success on Smackdown before moving to Raw in October ... Had an early winning streak, but came up short in a long feud with Aleister Black ... Found success as a disciple of Seth Rollins, teaming with Rollins to hold Raw tag title from January 20 to March 2.

115. COLT CABANA (6'1", 233, 21, 120) Had a busy year competing for myriad major promotions ... Held NWA National title for two months ... Teamed with Toru Yano in NJPW World Tag League, and teamed with Ryusuke Taguchi to challenge for NEVER openweight six-man tag title ... Took part in AEW's Casino Ladder Match and TNT title tournament.

116. TIMOTHY THATCHER (6'3", 224, 14, 230) Was a mainstay in MLW, EVOLVE, WXW, the U.K. before joining WWE officially ... Held WXW's Unified Championship from October 5 to December 14 ... Debuted in NXT to replace Pete Dunne as Matt Riddle's partner and co-holder of NXT tag team title ... Defeated Riddle in a Fight Pit Match in what was Riddle's final NXT appearance.

117. JORDAN DEVLIN (5'10", 183, 14, 58) NXT U.K.

wrestler was OTT champ for first four months of period ... Won NXT cruiserweight title in January, but was forced to vacate due to COVID-19 travel restrictions ... Won PROGRESS tag team title in November ... Was stripped of title and released by PROGRESS after being accused of assault.

***118. MASATO TANAKA** (5'11", 202, 27, 285) Hardcore veteran held ZERO1's NWA Intercontinental tag title for four months and Super Fireworks Pro's Blast King tag title from mid-August through end of period ... Won DDT D-Ou Grand Prix 2020, and held KO-D openweight title for six months ... Title loss to Tetsuya Endo was Tanaka's first DDT singles loss.

119. TAICHI (5'10", 220, 19, 89) Suzuki-gun cornerstone competed mostly in tags and six-man tags during period ... Did enter the 2019 G1 Climax ... Went 4-5 but earned wins over Tetsuya Naito and Juice Robinson ... With Zack Sabre Jr., went 9-6 in 2019 World Tag League ... Challenged for NEVER openweight six-man tag title on second night of Wrestle Kingdom 14.

120. ELI DRAKE (6'2", 229, 17, 149) Charter member of new NWA roster had successful year truncated by COVID-19 pandemic ... With James Storm, won NWA tag title on January 24 at Hard Times ... Duo had one successful defense before NWA production was halted ... Unsuccessfully challenged Orlando Colon for the WWC Universal title last August.



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121. KYLE O'REILLY (5'11", 196, 15, 84) Won NXT tag belts with Bobby Fish in August, and reigned until losing to The BroserWeights in February ... Duo also reached semifinals of 2020 Dusty Rhodes Classic and competed at Survivor Series ... Didn't wrestle over the final quarter of period, instead taking a new role as Roderick Strong's "therapist."

122. BOBBY FISH (5'11", 200, 18, 93) Six-month reign as NXT tag champ was Fish's second with O'Reilly ... In O'Reilly's absence, unsuccessfully teamed with Roderick Strong in attempt to regain title ... Was on losing Undisputed Era side at TakeOver: WarGames III and in an eight-man tag against Imperium at Worlds Collide ... Challenged Velveteen Dream for NXT North American title.

123. SHORTY G (5'8", 202, 5, 83) Former Chad Gable christened new identity after losing to Baron Corbin in King of the Ring final ... Was part of Team Hogan at Crown Jewel and Team Smackdown at Survivor Series ... Wrestled rival Sheamus on Royal Rumble pre-show ... Was on a winning streak on Smackdown as evaluation period ended.

124. EDDIE DENNIS (6'6", 230, 12, 213) Welshman returned from injury in September with his biggest career win, defeating WALTER to become PROGRESS Unified champion ... Reigned until vacating title in January ... Beat Trent Seven at NXT U.K. TakeOver: Blackpool 2 ... Last match before shutdown was a loss in Chris Brookes' Farewell Gauntlet before Brookes' move to Japan.

125. ILJA DRAGUNOV (5'9", 187, 10, 133) Held WXW tag team title with WALTER for a month last fall ... Lengthy PROGRESS feud with Cara Noir ended in a losing effort ... Faced Finn Balor at WWE Worlds Collide ... In NXT U.K., aided Gallus in their war with Imperium, and was #1 Contender

to WALTER's WWE U.K. title when production was halted.

126. SANTANA (5'10", 198, 13, 119) One-half of the Inner Circle's resident tag team specialists ... Debuted in AEW in August 2019 at All Out, storming the ring to attack the Lucha Bros. ... He and partner Ortiz enjoyed recent success in Mexico for AAA ... Perennial strong contender for AEW tag gold.

127. CESARO (6'5", 232, 20, 74) "The Swiss Cyborg" has slipped a few notches since parting ways with Sheamus ... Scored a convincing win over Drew Gulak during 'Mania kickoff ... Loss to Jeff Hardy at Money In The Bank forced him to take a hard look at where his career is going.

128. ORTIZ (5'8", 191, 12, 115) Though a few months younger than his tag partner Santana, is seen by many as the scrappier of the two ... After hitching onto Chris Jericho's wagon, Proud and Powerful have had arguably their highest profile year in pro wrestling ... Still trying to navigate his way through AEW's packed tag team division.

***129. DAGA** (5'8", 180, 12, NL) A true free agent, Tessa Blanchard's fiancé made quite an international mark in the past year, competing in Impact, Japan's Dragon Gate, and AAA, where he captured the Latin American championship from Drago ... Challenged unsuccessfully for the Impact tag title, teaming with Ortiz just before the latter's jump to AEW.

130. KONOSUKE TAKESHITA (6'2", 218, 8, 101) DDT workhorse had another banner year ... Last summer, added a fourth KO-D openweight title reign to his impressive resume, scoring a victory over Tetsuya Endo ... This was the 16th title that Takeshita has captured in DDT thus far ... Weight-lifting background gives him a powerful edge in the ring.



PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

PHOTO BY IAN STORCK/RING OF HONOR



131. EVIL (5'10", 234, 9, 61) NJPW journeyman joined BUSHI and Shingo Takagi at Wrestle Kingdom 14 to take the NEVER openweight six-man tag title for a record-tying fourth time ... Ranking doesn't reflect EVIL's double-title victory over Tetsuya Naito, nor his triumph in the 2020 New Japan Cup—both of which happened after evaluation period ended.

132. EDDIE EDWARDS (6', 214, 18, 95) Recently crowned Impact heavyweight champion underwent quite a dramatic transformation in the past year ... Known for wielding a kendo stick, he has made life difficult for many Impact competitors ... Floundered in the mid-card until recent return to main-event status ... Spent much of the year feuding with Michael Elgin.

133. JAKE LEE (6'3", 240, 9, 339) All Japan stalwart formed new faction, Jin, with Koji Iwamoto and Naoya Nomura at the end of 2019 ... Made an unsuccessful attempt at the coveted Triple Crown title (against Kento Miyahara) ... Lee and Iwamoto lost the All-Asia tag title to Isami Kodaka and Yuko Miyamoto.

134. CAMERON GRIMES (6', 220, 13, 208) Former PWG and Impact Wrestling star debuted for WWE's NXT brand in the summer of 2019, and has been making quite a splash ever since ... Made it to the final of the NXT Breakout Tournament last July ... Boasts recent singles victories over Dominik Dijakovic and Finn Balor.

135. SHUJI ISHIKAWA (6'5", 287, 17, 106) The former All Japan Triple Crown champ is thriving as a tag competitor ... Captured the All Japan tag title with partner Suwama ... Known as Violent Giants, the duo won the gold in January from Zeus & Ryoji Sai at AJPW New Year Wars, and were still the titleholders at press time.

***136. MARK HASKINS** (5'10", 209, 14, 155) Has not yet won gold in ROH, but came close to unseating Matt Taven for the ROH heavyweight title at War of the Worlds ... With Lifeblood partners Tracy Williams and PJ Black, unsuccessfully challenged Villain Enterprises for the ROH six-man tag belts ... Beat Bully Ray in a streetfight at Final Battle.

137. DUSTIN RHODES (6'6", 232, 32, NL) A three-decade veteran of the sport, Rhodes ranked in the inaugural edition of the "500" (#131) ... Embraced his original ring name after joining younger brother Cody in AEW ... Their Double or Nothing bout took Match of the Year honors in the *PWI* Awards ... Lost to Jake Hager at Revolution.

138. JOEY JANELA (5'8", 183, 14, 160) A founding member of the AEW roster, "The Bad Boy" has shown resilience in the face of disappointing losses to the likes of Jon Moxley, Shawn Spears and Brian Cage ... Continues to be a draw away from AEW, particularly in his old stomping grounds at Game Changer Wrestling.

139. NIEBLA ROJA (5'9", 185, 12, 346) Second-generation masked luchador and CMLL standout ... At press time, Roja was in the midst of an impressive three-year reign as CMLL Light Heavyweight champion ... His is the second longest stretch in the 20-year history of the title ... One-half of Los Hermanos Chavez, with Angel de Oro.

140. BRIAN PILLMAN JR. (6'2", 220, 3, 411) *PWI*'s 2019 Rookie of the Year ... The son of "The Loose Cannon" has been one of MLW's most promising stars ... More recently, made notable (albeit losing) appearances on AEW *Dark* ... Won the vacant Warrior Wrestling title in February and held it at the end of our evaluation period.

141. BUSHI (5'7", 183, 13, 265) One of New Japan Pro-Wrestling's leading junior heavyweights... Failed to make the finals of the 2019 Best of the Super Juniors tournament ... Joined EVIL and Shingo Takagi to win the NEVER openweight six-man tag team title at Wrestle Kingdom 14 last January... The victory marks BUSHI's fourth run with the title, which ties the all-time record.

142. YUJI OKABAYASHI (5'10", 271, 12, 132) A 12-year veteran of Big Japan Pro Wrestling and member of the "Strong" division ... Lost the BJW Strong Heavyweight title to Kohei Sato at Death Mania last August in Nagoya ... Teamed with Yuji Hino last fall to emerge victorious in the 2019 Furinkazan tag team tournament.

143. MR. ANDERSON (6'2", 243, 21, NL) Among the first competitors signed to the newly relaunched NWA when it debuted its weekly *Powerrrr* program on YouTube last fall ... Won an eight-man gauntlet match last December to gain entrance into the NWA TV title tournament, but wasn't medically cleared to compete ... Booming voice still delights fans.

144. SHAWN SPEARS (6'3", 223, 19, 233) Firmly established himself as a cold-blooded rulebreaker after joining AEW in the summer of 2019, splitting Cody's head open with a steel chair ... Has been receiving expert tutelage from none other than Tully Blanchard ... Most recent recipient of the infamous black glove worn by Blackjack Mulligan and others.

145. TYLER BATE (5'7", 175, 8, 107) Inaugural U.K. champ is now a wizened, 23-year-old "veteran" ... Took part in a hard-fought classic against NXT U.K. champ WALTER at TakeOver: Cardiff ... Although unsuccessful that night, he reminded fans he's much more than simply one-half of Moustache Mountain ... "Tyler Driver '97" remains an effective finishing move.

***146. LA PARK** (6'1", 275, 38, 180) One of the most recognized luchadores of all time, with nearly 40 years of competition under his belt ... The former "Chairman of WCW" made his *PWI* "500" debut back in 1994 ... Challenged Jacob Fatu for the MLW heavyweight title in the main event of the promotion's first PPV, Saturday Night SuperFight.

147. DAISUKE SEKIMOTO (5'9", 262, 21, 129) 21-year veteran of Big Japan Pro Wrestling made his ring debut at 18 years of age ... Captured his tenth Big Japan tag title last December, teaming with Kohei Sato to seize the vacant crown at Big Japan's 25th Anniversary show in Yokohama ... At press time, the two were still champions.

148. MOOSE (6'5", 295, 9, 126) The former NFL offensive lineman capped off a middling year by declaring himself the TNA heavyweight champion after beating Hernandez and Michael Elgin at Rebellion ... Defended the defunct "title" as if it were still active ... Despite numerous successful defenses, Impact did not officially recognize Moose as champion.

149. EL HIJO DE LA PARK (6'1", 200, 12, NL) Son of LA Park has been the co-holder of Generacion XXI's tag title with his legendary father for nearly two years ... Also holds the Kaos Lucha Libre Trios championship with younger brother LA Park Jr. and La Bestia del Ring ... Still working to step out of his dad's long shadow.

150. TAMA TONGA (6', 209, 12, 94) One half of New Japan's Guerrillas of Destiny and founding member of Bullet Club ... He and Tanga Loa lost the IWGP tag title to David Finlay and Juice Robinson at Wrestle Kingdom 14, but regained it just one month later ... Win marked G.O.D.'s sixth IWGP tag title reign, tying the all-time record.



PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

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***151. TANGA LOA** (6'2", 220, 12, 97) Son of Haku and adopted brother of his long-time Guerrillas of Destiny tag team partner Tama Tonga ... The larger member of the team, Loa brings the power to the equation, balancing out his brother's more high-flying approach ... Unlike his brother, Loa spent some time in the earlier portion of his career as a WWE developmental prospect, even enjoying a run in NXT.

152. AUSTIN THEORY (6'1", 220, 4, 80) Signed a WWE developmental contract in August 2019 ... Made his NXT debut on Christmas with a shot at Roderick Strong's North American title ... Teamed with Angel Garza to challenge for Raw tag title at WrestleMania ... Largely absent from TV over the summer following a #SpeakingOut allegation in June.

153. MINORU SUZUKI (5'10", 225, 32, 47) New Japan's veteran tough guy continues competing for the company that gave him his break three decades ago ... Formed a formidable team with Lance Archer for the 2019 World Tag League tournament ... Unsuccessfully challenged Jon Moxley for the IWGP U.S. title at The New Beginning in Osaka.

154. MONTEZ FORD (6'1", 235, 5, 184) One-half of the Street Profits with Angelo Dawkins ... Captured the Raw tag title from Seth Rollins and Murphy on the March 2 edition of *Raw* ... Tore the house down with a successful defense against Angel Garza and Austin Theory at

WrestleMania ... Ranks among WWE's most majestic aerialists.

155. ELIAS (6', 217, 12, 110) Tough year for the musical grappler ... After spending much of last summer battling for the 24/7 title, had to bow out of the King of the Ring tournament with an injured ankle ... Scored an impressive win over King Corbin at WrestleMania ... On the shelf again with a torn pec.

156. SAMI ZAYN (6'1", 205, 18, 70) Outspoken superstar won his first title on WWE's main roster, taking the Intercontinental crown from Braun Strowman in a three-on-one handicap bout at Elimination Chamber ... Successfully defended the title against Daniel Bryan at WrestleMania, but was stripped a month later after refusing to compete due to COVID-19 concerns.

157. ANGELO DAWKINS (6'5", 260, 8,

186) The power man of the Street Profits, Dawkins also acts as something of a straight man to his energetic and colorful partner Montez Ford ... Distinguished himself during the team's feud with The Viking Raiders, in which his brute strength and imposing size most definitely came in handy.

158. DANHAUSEN (7', 326, 7, NL) Midwest indie favorite challenged Shane Taylor for ROH's TV title last November ... Teamed with Ethan Page and Swoggle to win Black Label Pro tag title days later in Indiana ... Known for his dislike of swearing, appreciation for The Champs' 1958 hit, "Tequila" ... Steer clear of his jar of teeth!

159. KILLIAN DAIN (6'4", 322, 15, 196) With Sanity disbanded, Dain has returned to singles competition as part of the NXT brand ... Battled Matt Riddle in a streetfight ending in a no-contest ... Scored a hard-fought singles win over Pete Dunne last December ... Damian Priest and Dominik Dijakovic have had his number in recent months.

160. FAYE JACKSON (5'4", 4, NL) ROH Dojo grad makes her first "500" appearance following a big year on the indies ... Scored victories over Rickey Shane Page and Chris Dickinson in the U.S. and competed prominently in Germany's WXW ... Multi-time women's and tag champ likes to serve her Triple Spun Milkshake (running hip attack) to opponents.

161. DAISUKE SASAKI (5'6", 176, 15, 262) DDT mainstay won the Universal championship from Chris Brookes in March ... Had challenged Brookes immediately following his winning the title, promptly stealing the belt from him in an ambush ... Lost it back to his rival on June 27 after 99 days as champ ... Originally trained under Dick Togo.

162. KIP SABIAN (5'11", 183, 10, 247) Has struggled since coming to AEW ... Eliminated by Dustin Rhodes in the opening round of the TNT title tournament ... Teamed with Jimmy Havoc, but failed to win tag belts from Kenny Omega and Adam Page ... With Havoc's AEW future in jeopardy, Sabian has focused on managing fiancée Penelope Ford.

163. FLIP GORDON (5'10", 187, 5, 114) At press time, he and Brian Cage had been tag champs for World Series Wrestling for over a year, having beaten Villain Enterprises in June 2019 ... Ironically, Gordon would join Villain Enterprises in ROH the following month ... Challenged Nick Aldis for the NWA Heavyweight title at Hard Times in January.

164. SONNY KISS (5'8", 185, 7, 358) The sport's most famous openly gender-fluid competitor ... Lost the Warriors of Wrestling title to Darius Carter in New York last August before signing a full-time deal with AEW ... Struggled to find his place in AEW until forming a tag team with Joey Janela that has been gaining traction in recent months.

165. DAX HARWOOD (5'11", 223, 16, 103) The former Scott Dawson made the jump to AEW with partner Cash Wheeler (Dash Wilder) ... Became the first duo to hold the NXT, Raw, and Smackdown title when they beat New Day for the Smackdown title at Clash of Champions ... Duo is now known as FTR in AEW.

166. CASH WHEELER (5'11", 233, 18, 98) The other half of the tag team originally known in WWE as The Revival ... After losing the Smackdown tag title back to New Day last November in Manchester, England, he and his partner asked for a release from their WWE contracts in April, and promptly jumped ship to AEW.

167. KUSHIDA (5'9", 192, 15, 77) The former MMA competitor spent nine years competing in New Japan before signing to NXT in mid 2019 ... Reunited with former New Japan tag team partner Alex Shelley to enter the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic ... Fell short in the tournament to crown NXT's Interim Cruiserweight champion.

168. XAVIER WOODS (5'11", 205, 15, 86) One-third of arguably the most popular tag team of the past decade, The New Day ... Recorded yet another reign this year as World tag team champion ... Nevertheless, an Achilles tendon injury suffered in October relegated him to New Day's cheerleader for much of the year.

PHOTO BY MIKEY NOLAN



***169. JAKE ATLAS** (5'10", 200, 5, 331) The former West Coast indie sensation was first hired by WWE as a goodwill ambassador in the summer of 2019 before officially signing a talent contract in October ... Lost his NXT debut match to fellow newcomer Dexter Lumis in April ... Looks to break out as a star on either NXT or 205 Live.

170. EL PHANTASMO (6'1", 196, 15, NL) Bullet Club member won the prestigious 2019 Super J-Cup tournament ... Lost RevPro's British cruiserweight title to Michael Oku in February after nearly a year as champ ... Spent almost seven months as IWGP junior heavyweight tag champ alongside Taiji Ishimori ... Fast becoming one of the world's preeminent high-flyers.

171. TREY (5'9", 172, 11, NL) After debuting in Impact Wrestling in 2018 as a member of the Rascalz stable, Trey has broken out as more of a singles success in the past year ... Ascended to number-one contendership for the X division title, but failed to capture the gold from Ace Austin ... More recently, was in the mix for the vacant Impact heavyweight title, competing at Slammiversary in a five-way match also involving Austin, Rich Swann, Eric Young, and Eddie Edwards, who took home the belt.

172. MANCE WARNER (6'1", 215, 5, 190) The former CZW standout has raised his profile even further since signing with Major League Wrestling ... Beat Jimmy Havoc and Bestia 666 in a brutal "Stairway to Hell" match last November at MLW Saturday Night SuperFight... At press time, had held the heavyweight title of the Illinois-based All American Wrestling since last December, having beaten Josh Alexander for the distinction.



PHOTO BY JAYLEE PHOTOGRAPHY

***173. TRISH ADORA** (5'9", 175, 4, NL) "The Afro-Punk" rocks onto our list thanks to a number of intergender victories on the independent circuit ... U.S. Army vet made history in F1ght Club Pro Wrestling when she defeated Darius Lockhart and Mr. Grimm in a triple-threat match to become the inaugural Pan-Afrikan Diaspora Champion on February 15.

174. KATSUHIKO NAKAJIMA (5'9", 209, 16, 167) The Pro Wrestling NOAH veteran became just the second GHC National champion last May, beating original titleholder Takashi Sugiura in Kawasaki ... Still held the belt at press time ... He and Go Shiozaki captured their third GHC Tag Team Championship at the end of June 2019, holding it for more than six months before dropping it to Naomichi Marufuji and Masaaki Mochizuki at the beginning of 2020.

175. JOSH BRIGGS (6'8", 268, 4, 416) Reigning EVOLVE champion when the company was sold, having beaten eventual WWE signee Austin Theory in November 2019 ... For much of 2020, Briggs seemed a shoe-in to sign with WWE ... With EVOLVE's future up in the air, Briggs' future in pro wrestling also remains uncertain.

176. JAKE HAGER (6'7", 275, 14, NL) Former Jack Swagger found new life in AEW as a bruiser for Chris Jericho's Inner Circle ... Dominated Dustin Rhodes at Revolution in February ... Notable 4-0 record ended with eye-opening no-holds-barred title match loss to Jon Moxley in April ... Burgeoning MMA career left Hager off 2019 PWI "500" list.

177. TRENT SEVEN (6'1", 216, 10, 111) Thrilling NXT U.K. and PROGRESS star turned heads teaming with Moustache Mountain partner Tyler Bate in a strong (albeit losing) effort against a reunited Team DIY at Worlds Collide 2020 ... Alliance had more success against The Forgotten Sons ... Unsuccessful in singles outing against Finn Balor on NXT.

178. BOBBY GUNNS (5'10", 202, 8, 159) "King of Smoke Style" was a two-time WXW Unified champion during period ... First reign ended thanks to Timothy Thatcher in October ... Reached finals of EPW Title Tournament in November, falling to Carnage ... Regained WXW Unified gold in a December four-way match, and was still champ in March when WXW halted due to COVID-19.

179. ROWAN (6'8", 315, 17, 92) Struggled after severing ties with Daniel Bryan and enduring a high-profile loss to Roman Reigns ... Did manage a win over Reigns at Clash of Champions ... More recently known for pet tarantula and steamrolling Raw's preliminary competition ... With WWE in his rear-view, could he be eyeing a return to Japan, where his reputation began?

180. ERIK (6'1", 247, 17, 127) One-half of the decorated Viking Raiders tandem that was projected to dominate Raw's tag scene, but has struggled ... Brief three-month tag title run was halted by the makeshift team of Seth Rollins and Buddy Murphy ... Tepid late-spring rivalry with Street Profits has done little to raise his stock.

181. IVAR (6'2", 305, 19, 123) Larger (and arguably more handsome) Viking Raider struggles for traction on *Raw* ... Brief reign as tag champion in late 2019 cut short in January by Rollins and Murphy ... Dreams of clash with Authors of Pain never materialized ... More recently bested in disappointing friendly rivalry with Street Profits.

182. MARKO STUNT (5'2", 120, 6, NL) Fiery, undersized competitor found a home in 2019 as part of Jurassic Express in AEW ... Filled in admirably for injured Luchasaurus in late 2019 tag title tournament, falling short to Lucha Bros. ... Inspiring against MJF, Brodie Lee, and Lance Archer, but small frame has somewhat limited his success.

183. JIMMY USO (6'3", 251, 11, 63) Six-time WWE tag champion suffered increasingly frustrating year, characterized by legal troubles, nagging injuries, and start-and-stop momentum ... Still, renewed New Day rivalry and feud with The Miz & John Morrison garnered much attention on *Smackdown* ... Looked stellar in singles ladder match loss against Morrison and Kofi Kingston at WrestleMania.

184. JEY USO (6'2", 228, 11, 62) Frequently overlooked in crowded WWE tag scene, Jey and brother Jimmy had trouble standing out over evaluation period ... With Jimmy's high-profile distractions and knee troubles, Jey also found his title aspirations sidelined ... Despite setbacks, proud Anoa'i family member is always just one match from return to glory.

***185. MARQ QUEN** (5'10", 210, 5, NL) Up-and-coming AEW tag and singles star showed glimpses of potential in 2020 ... Alongside Isiah Kassidy, held his own against the Young Bucks and Best Friends ... Gained attention with strong TNT title match against Cody in June ... Seems destined to take Private Party more public as popularity grows.

186. ETHAN PAGE (6'2", 240, 13, 217) Early-2019 reunion with indie scene partner Josh Alexander paid dividends with year-plus Impact Wrestling tag team title reign ... Incidentally, The North defeated AEW-bound Santana and Ortiz for the honors last year ... One-month dual reign in 2019 as IWC belt-holders cemented reputation as top tandem.

187. ISIAH KASSIDY (6', 215, 5, NL) NYC native took Private Party to AEW in 2019

... Despite strong showings against mid-level talent in promotion, has struggled against AEW's "elite" tier ... Year defined by frequent losses to rival Lucha Bros. in AEW, HOG, and elsewhere ... Could be thrust into singles competition should Marq Quen find success.

188. DRAGO (5'8", 174, 22, 242) AAA and former Lucha Underground star frequently crosses U.S. border to compete for Major League Wrestling ... Reign as AAA Latin American titleholder highlighted early 2019 evaluation period before October defeat by Daga ... Battled MLW middleweight champ Myron Reed in tough January loss ... More recently struggled in singles matches for both companies.

189. AR FOX (6', 185, 13, 309) Swift independent journeyman remains active in numerous promotions, notably CZW and, until recently, EVOLVE ... Recent achievements include two-month CZW Wired title reign and five-month EVOLVE tag championship alliance with Leon Ruff ... Now re-evaluating his personal wrestling journey in light of void left by EVOLVE's apparent dissolution.

190. NAOMICHI MARUFUJI (5'9", 198, 22, 78) NOAH veteran took advantage of relatively active Japanese wrestling scene to continue momentum in one-on-one and tag matches ... Recent featured partner of fellow icon Keiji Mutoh, an alliance that yielded success in May and June 2020 ... Legend of NJPW, AJPW, and DDT has slowed some, but continues to compete at a high level.



PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

191. ISAAH SCOTT (6'1", 201, 11, 246) Former Shane Strickland continues to make strides in NXT's growing cruiserweight division ... Despite vying for that title on occasion against Drew Gulak, Angel Garza, and as part of the Spring 2020 interim title tournament, has fallen disappointingly short ... Challenges aside, "Swerve" boasts a dynamic style that makes him a constant threat.

192. ROB VAN DAM (6'1", 235, 30, NL) Popular longtime star has undergone a career renaissance with Impact Wrestling ... Despite signature hairstyle and singlet, embraced a new, alternative attitude toward the familiar term "Three-Way Dance" ... Involvement in "Cancel Culture" group turned some heads, but, at 49 years old, another RVD singles championship run seems unlikely.

193. CHRIS DICKINSON (5'10", 235, 17, 407) Resourceful veteran unafraid to demonstrate harder edge in GCW, IWA Mid-South, and other promotions ... Captured GCW's Acid Cup 2020 trophy after winning four matches in two-day span in March ... Hard-hitting style not enough in Limitless and Crown of Glory title matches against Anthony Greene and AJ Gray, respectively.

194. FLAMITA (5'7", 165, 14, 341) One-half of Ring of Honor's MexaBloods saw wrestling activity slow in February due to pandemic ... Earlier evaluation period characterized by frequent trips between U.S., Mexico, and Japan ... With regular partners Bandido and Rey Horus, captured ROH's six-man belts in January thriller against Villain Enterprises in Atlanta.

195. JOSH ALEXANDER (6'1", 240, 15, 210) Trainee of Johnny Devine and Michael Elgin settled into Impact Wrestling partnership with old friend Ethan Page for full-year tag title run ... Successful defenses for The North included The Rascalz, Fallah Bahh & TJP, and Reno Scum ... Teamed with Elgin in noteworthy win over WWE's Moustache Mountain in August.

196. AERO STAR (5'7", 150, 17, 188) Well-established AAA competitor is undefeated in *lucha de apuestas* matches over 10 years, retaining his mask in December win over Monster Clown ... Most successful in traditional and six-man tag matches with

PHOTO BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO



Maximo, Drago, and Octagon Jr., among others ... Returned to U.S. in losing efforts to MLW's Alexander Hammerstone and Impact's Rascalz.

197. BRODY KING (6'5", 284, 5, 79) Young, punishing muscle behind ROH's Villain Enterprises, from which he frequently draws tag partners ... Ten-month stranglehold on company's six-man title abruptly halted with January loss to Bandido, Flamita, and Rey Horus ... Experienced frustrating string of defeats to Jeff Cobb ... Frequently ventures into New Japan and PWG.

***198. RICHARD HOLLIDAY** (6'3", 238, 5, NL) "Most Marketable Man in Wrestling" formed winning team with AEW's MJF ... They held MLW's tag title from July until November ... Looked promising in loss to NXT-bound Timothy Thatcher at Opera Cup 2019 ... Brash and outspoken, takes great pleasure in defeating legends such as Savio Vega and Carlito.

199. JOE GACY (6', 249, 14, 304) Frequent EVOLVE competitor returned to his hardcore roots, recapturing the Combat Zone Wrestling title in 2019 ... Fended off AR Fox, Anthony Greene, and Matt Tremont, among other challengers ... Also boasted four-month reign as MCW Rage TV champion ... With Eddie Kingston, held EVOLVE tag gold early in the period.

200. SUSUMU YOKOSUKA (5'8", 169, 21, 345) Japan's "Technic*Master" draws strength from intense training under Ultimo Dragon and Dos Caras ... Veteran of numerous promotions focuses primarily on Dragon Gate and All Japan, where he's reigned as junior heavyweight titleholder since January ... Thrilling in loss to Open the Dream Gate champion Naruki Doi.

201. JUICE ROBINSON (6'3", 220, 12, 32) Promising New Japan star poured it on this year, establishing himself as perennial challenger for singles and tag gold ... Struggles against Lance Archer and Jon Moxley temporarily grounded U.S. title aspirations ... Found more success with Dave Finlay, winning 2019 World Tag League and IWGP tag championship.

202. CHRIS BEY (5'9", 166, 4, NL) Independent sensation locked Impact's X division title in his scope this year after much time toiling on independent scene ... Former construction worker understands value of hard work and grit needed to accomplish a project ... Cultivated vicious "Final Finesse" Brazilian kick that, ironically, leaves opponents wishing for a hard-hat.

203. LUKE GALLOWS (6'8", 304, 17, 177) Despite winning WWE's Tag Team World Cup, Gallows and Karl Anderson largely encountered another frustrating year ... Entertaining in flashes when realigned with AJ Styles ... Poor win-loss record left him vulnerable to 2020 budget cuts ... The "Good Brothers" signed with Impact shortly after the evaluation period ended.

204. KARL ANDERSON (6', 213, 18, 181) Consummate tag wrestler continued to hone partnership with Luke Gallows despite little opportunity to build on reputation from Japan ... Designated "Best Tag Team In The World" at Crown Jewel in October, but accomplished little else of note ... Analysts agree Impact signing is good news for tandem.

***205. DEXTER LUMIS** (6'2", 240, 12, NL) Former Impact and OVW performer Sam Shaw reinvented himself after signing with WWE in 2019 ... Cold and calculating Lumis seemingly draws inspiration from Steve Austin's original concept for "Stone Cold" ... Recently targeted and terrorized Roderick Strong and his Undisputed Era allies ... Logical contender for NXT singles titles.

206. HERNANDEZ (6'2", 295, 23, NL) Now 47, "Super Mex" carries on without LAX, still overpowering competition on Impact and some independents ... Held his own against TNA champion Moose in late spring, but ultimately fell short ... Reached semifinal round in #1 contender tournament for the Impact title before being bested by Ace Austin.

207. SAMOA JOE (6'2", 279, 20, 11) Huge drop-off year for Joe, who once seemed poised to win the WWE World title ... Struggled at times in rivalries with Kofi Kingston, Ricochet, and Seth Rollins, but found his stride in early 2020 alliance with Kevin Owens ... Some fear the current *Raw* commentator lost his greatest battle to injuries.

208. ACH (5'9", 185, 13, 366) Sadly, ACH's high-profile departure from WWE drew more attention than his breathtaking in-ring performances ... Traction in NXT cut short after dispute with WWE over controversial, racially charged t-shirt design ... Briefly quit wrestling days after signing with MLW, but is poised to make an anticipated comeback on the indies.

209. ANTHONY GREENE (6'2", 191, 8, 496) "Retrosexual" continues to forge on outside EVOLVE ... Reigning Limitless champion beat MJF for the honors in September ... Popular competitor throughout the Northeast, he rocks a mean 'stache and Zubaz-style gear ... 27 year old's relationship with Ava Everett has real "Power Couple" potential.

210. JORDAN OLIVER (6', 176, 3, NL) CZW mainstay parlayed 14-month run as Wired champion into match for Combat Zone title, but was too young to celebrate at the bar ... Strong upside despite high-profile losses to AR Fox and Joe Gacy ... In March, unsuccessfully vied for AAA Trios straps against Los Jinetes del Aire in MLW.



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***211. HARASHIMA** (5'10", 198, 19, 141) Ultra-successful DDT competitor added to his trophy case with reigns as dual KO-D openweight and Extreme champion ... Combined eight-month reign between the two produced thrilling matches against Masato Tanaka, Shinya Aoki, and Konosuke Takeshita ... Run with KO-D belt was 10th in career, a record for DDT.

212. ROBERT ROODE (6', 233, 22, 51) Former TNA and NXT champion has been notably inactive during the COVID-19 era ... Brief suspension halted momentum of partnership with Dolph Ziggler that some expected would win tag gold on *Smackdown* ... Did hold Raw tag title in August ... Quietly traded back to Raw, alongside Ziggler, in June.

213. ISAMI KODAKA (5'8", 165, 17, 313) Rough-and-tumble Big Japan, BASARA, and All Japan wrestler delighted fans in February, traveling to U.S. for series of deathmatches involving Matt Tremont and the late Danny Havoc ... Weathered barbed wire and other weapons-matches in his home country ... Reigning All Asia tag title-holder with Yuko Miyamoto, a distinction earned in March.

214. DEZ (5'9", 189, 9, 382) Promising X division star now competes mostly in Rascalz team alongside Zachary Wentz and Trey Miguel ... Continual

challengers for The North's Impact gold consistently came up short ... Successful enough, however, to remain in contention ... Thrilling ladder match win against AEW's Santana and Ortiz for PWG last year.

215. WENTZ (5'10", 176, 6, 389) Rascalz member stepped up in singles ranks, filling in during the final round of Impact's #1 contender tournament in June ... Lost to Ace Austin in that match ... Successful in spurts against company's top tag teams, but has yet to capitalize on numerous opportunities for tandem gold.

216. YUKO MIYAMOTO (5'9", 198, 16, 332) Current Big Japan All Asia tag champ with Isami Kodaka has occasional dalliances with deathmatches ... Toured U.S. for GCW, facing Nick Gage ... 552-day reign as Chaos Undecided Freedom champion for Japanese promotion 666 ended with June loss to Onryo ... Held prestigious NWA Intercontinental tag title with Masashi Takeda.

217. EDDIE KINGSTON (5'11", 240, 17, 286) Veteran bruiser continued to intimidate opponents in the NWA, EVOLVE, and UK's PROGRESS ... Tough matchup with WALTER for latter promotion's title earned him justified attention throughout Europe ... Frequent partner of Homicide and Joe Gacy ...

With Gacy, briefly held EVOLVE tag gold early in grading period.

218. DR. WAGNER JR. (5'10", 216, 34, 293) Despite being in his mid-50s, the "Doctor Of AAA" still cuts through the ring with surgical precision ... Doubters can look to amazing three-way win over Blue Demon Jr. and Daga in Monterrey in May ... Dual KAOZ heavyweight and FMLL tag champion occasionally traveled stateside for Impact before government travel ban.

219. HOMICIDE (5'9", 218, 27, 276) Nearly 14 years after upending Bryan Danielson for the ROH title, this veteran continues to compete for dozens of promotions ... With Eddie Kingston, joined NWA to twice challenge Royce Isaacs and Thomas Latimer for tag gold ... February IWA Mid-South encounter with champion Aaron Williams also stands out.

220. JAY BRISCOE (6'1", 233, 20, 108) Twenty-plus-year career has seen two ROH titles and a remarkable 11 tag championships with brother Mark ... Lost stranglehold on most recent tag reign at Final Battle 2019 against Jay Lethal and Jonathan Gresham ... Ventured to CMLL last summer for series of multi-man dream singles and tag team encounters.

221. ALEX SHELLEY (5'9", 198, 18, NL) Once up-and-coming TNA and ROH star surprised many by reforming Time Splitters alliance with Kushida for a spell ... Tandem fell to Grizzled Young Veterans in Dusty Rhodes Classic tournament in January ... Reformed Motor City Machine Guns with Chris Sabin this July.

222. TRENT (6'2", 215, 16, 231) Veteran out of Rochester traveled extensively since leaving WWE in 2013, more recently finding comfort in "Best Friends" Chuck Taylor and Orange Cassidy ... Poised to capture AEW tag gold after back-to-back wins against Inner Circle members in June ... Problematic match with Jon Moxley in January likely more telling of prospects.

223. CHUCK TAYLOR (6'2", 209, 18, 241) Longtime indie comedy act found sweet spot in 2019, palling with Trent and Orange Cassidy in AEW ... Became serious contenders after 2020 wins over Inner Circle, Private Party, and Butcher and Blade ... Despite loss to AEW tag champions Adam Page and Kenny Omega after evaluation period, recent momentum could forecast success.

224. DRAKE MAVERICK (5'4", 141, 19, NL) Frustrating year—sans comedic 24/7 title reigns—culminated in April release from WWE ... Rode last-chance NXT Interim Cruiserweight title tournament opportunity over several weeks to reach last round ... Strong in finals loss to El Hijo del Fantasma (Santos Escobar) ... Awarded new contract and Escobar beatdown afterward.

225. MARK BRISCOE (6', 229, 20, 112) Institution of ROH tag division has won gold with brother Jay record-setting 11 times ... Most recent five-month reign ended with December 2019 loss to Jay Lethal and Jonathan Gresham ... Sometimes overlooked due to brother's singles success ... Famously broke in through Delaware wrestling scene, supposedly donning a mask to avoid being outed as underage.

226. T-HAWK (5'9", 190, 10, 164) Teamed with Strong Hearts ally CIMA in battle royal for a shot at the AEW tag title ... Scored singles victories in BJW's Ikkitousen Strong Climb tournament, besting Yoshiaki Inamura and Akira Hyodo ... Captured KO-D six-man title with El Lindaman and Tetsuya Endo, retaining the straps for three months.

***227. ALEX ZAYNE** (6'1", 187, 15, NL) Kentucky's most acclaimed Taco Bell enthusiast landed singles victories over Tony Deppen, Puma King, and Anthony Greene ... Defeated Bandido and

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Andrew Everett in appearances with ROH ... Wrestled for NJPW in a series of shows in the U.S., lacing up as both a singles and tag competitor ... Earned tag victories while competing in Japan for WRESTLE-1, BJW, and VKF.

228. STU GRAYSON (5'10", 187, 15, 259) Began his second Federation de Lutte Quebecoise title reign in September when he beat Tyson Dux in a falls-count-anywhere match ... Maintains a powerful alliance with Evil Uno as the Dark Order, logging tag wins over formidable AEW teams including Strong Hearts, The Jurassic Express, and SCU.

229. SHO (5'8", 205, 8, 197) A mainstay in the NJPW tag scene with Roppongi 3K teammate partner YOH ... Duo earned victories against teams including Birds of Prey and Suzuki-gun ... Began fourth title reign as co-holder of IWGP junior heavyweight straps when Roppongi 3K beat Bullet Club contingent in January ... Beat Shingo Takagi in first round of New Japan Cup 2020.

230. RICH SWANN (5'8", 200, 12, 88) Earned a shot at the X division title in August but couldn't topple Jake Crist for the strap ... Joined forces with Willie Mack for tag wins against Impact teams LAX and The Desi Hit Squad ... Challenged Sami Callihan for Impact heavyweight belt ... After return from injury, has set his sights on the main event.

231. YOH (5'7", 187, 8, 204) Began fourth reign as IWGP junior heavyweight tag champ with Roppongi 3K teammate SHO in January ... Defended title against Suzuki-gun as well as Rocky Romero and Ryusuke Taguchi ... Learned the ropes from veteran grapplers "Mr. IWGP" Yuji Nagata and NJPW trainer Junji Hirata.

232. EVIL UNO (5'11", 220, 16, 268) Unsuccessfully challenged Dark Order teammate Stu Grayson for Grayson's Federation de Lutte Quebecoise title in a three-way dance including Beast King FTM ... Earned a shot at Daniel Garcia's C4 title but couldn't get the win ... With Grayson, he's logged wins over many of AEW's most prominent tag teams.

233. DAVID FINLAY (6', 209, 8, 399) Won 2019 NJPW Tag League tourney with FinJuice partner Juice Robinson, with a series of wins culminating in a final round victory over Los Ingobernables de Japon ... Also won IWGP tag belts in January, defeating Guerrillas Of Destiny ... Held championship for a month before losing to G.O.D. in a rematch.

234. JAKE CRIST (5'9", 196, 17, 158) Beat Kevin Giza for IWA Mid-South junior heavyweight title, holding the strap for almost two months ... As part of oVe, he celebrated a win over The Revelation in a "Cage of Horrors" bout for REVOLVER ... Defeated Alex Colon in a barbed wire match.

235. RICKEY SHANE PAGE (6'5", 282, 17, NL) Saw action around Japan in late 2019,

picking up the "W" in a host of singles and tag contests ... Advanced to final round of DOA Death Match Tournament 2020, ultimately falling to Clint Margera ... Beat Eddie Kingston in a no-DQ bout ... Wrestled GCW title from AJ Gray ... Has become GCW's most hated antagonist.

236. BRONSON REED (5'11", 275, 13, 266) Solid mid-card presence on the NXT roster ... Challenged NXT champ Adam Cole for his title in August but fell short ... Singles wins over Killian Dain, Arturo Ruas, and Dorian Mak ... Partnered with Shotzi Blackhart for a mixed-tag win over Cameron Grimes and Reina Gonzalez.

237. VINCENT (6', 189, 14, 145) 15 months into his current reign as CWE heavyweight champion ... Holds wins over The Wonderboys and Kickin 'n' Stompin' as part of The Kingdom ... Singles wins against Beer City Bruiser and Matt Taven ... Also scored victories tagging with Bateman in Ring of Honor.

238. FABIAN AICHNER (6', 220, 9, 323) Partnered with NXT U.K. Imperium stablemate Marcel Barthel for tag triumphs over The Forgotten Sons, The Hunt, and Danny Burch & Oney Lorcan ... Beat Dexter Lumis in singles action ... Joined Barthel to defeat Matt Riddle and Timothy Thatcher for NXT tag belts in May.

***239. CIMA** (5'9", 180, 23, 257) Captured the Aero Nacional title by winning a six-way bout against the likes of Aramis and Drastik Boy ... Temporarily allied with SCU for a tag win over Kip Sabian and The Hybrid 2 ... Toured Japan in late 2019 for a series of tag and singles bouts ... Marked victories in AEW and beyond with Dark Order member Evil Uno.

240. MARCEL BARTHEL (6'3", 209, 12, 326) German-born member of NXT U.K.'s Imperium group ... Came out on top in singles contest against Jeet Rama ... Saw action on *Raw* with the collected might of Imperium in a battle against Kevin Owens, Seth Rollins, and Street Profits ... Co-holder of NXT U.K. belts with Fabian Aichner.



241. KENNY KING (6', 230, 18, 117) Unsuccessfully challenged Matt Taven for ROH heavyweight title as part of a three-way dance ... Earned a shot at the ROH TV title by defeating Jeff Cobb and Tracy Williams ... Beat Rhett Titus in a singles match ... Captured Future Stars of Wrestling tag straps with Shogun Jones.

***242. BARBARO CAVERNARIO** (5'8", 196, 12, 147) Joined forces with Tyson la Bestia to defeat El Demasiado & LA Park Jr. ... Teamed with Espanto Jr. for first round and quarter-final wins in Torneo Gran Alternativa 2019 ... Challenged Caristico for the NWA Historic Middleweight title but didn't get the win ... Also competed in New Japan and Ring of Honor.

243. R-TRUTH (6'2", 220, 23, 56) Partnered with Carmella for mixed-tag wins over Drake Maverick and Renee Michelle as well as Sami Zayn and Liv Morgan ... Singles victories over Shelton Benjamin and Cal Bloom ... Teamed with Drew McIntyre for tag win over Lashley and MVP ... Remains the leader in total reigns with the well-traveled 24/7 title.

244. VOLADOR JR. (5'9", 192, 24, 118) Celebrated tag wins with partner Mistico as El Sky Team ... Scored victories over Ultimo Guerrero and Gran Guerrero ... Still holds the NWA Historic Welterweight strap after almost two years as champ

... Seasoned, yet still nimble veteran was trained by Satanico and the original Volador.

245. ZACK GIBSON (6'3", 220, 11, 207) Won PROGRESS tag title with Grizzled Young Veterans teammate James Drake in July and held the straps for 49 days ... Earned first round and semifinal wins in the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic alongside Drake, including a victory over The Undisputed Era ... Mounted unsuccessful challenges for NXT U.K. tag belts.

246. MATT HARDY (6'2", 236, 27, 144) Made a go at the United States and Intercontinental titles in mid-2019 but came up short ... Wrapped up his WWE stint in March and debuted with AEW in May ... With his "Damascus" persona, Hardy has estimated his age at 3,000 years old, (unofficially) making him the oldest person to ever land a spot in the PWI "500."

247. JAMES DRAKE (5'11", 181, 10, 205) The quieter member of Grizzled Young Veterans prefers to let his in-ring work do the talking ... With Zack Gibson, enjoyed brief reign as PROGRESS tag champs (the duo's third in as many years) ... Blackpool native held the top title of U.K.-based Pro Wrestling Chaos for much of last year.

248. AKAM (6'3", 290, 5, 223) A prominent force on WWE's main tag roster as one-half of Authors of Pain ... Allied with Seth Rollins for tag wins over Street Profits and Hawkins and Ryder ... Temporarily joined with Seth Rollins for a series of six-man tag victories ... Also aligned with Murphy for six-man bouts.

249. REZAR (6'4", 330, 4, 211) The other half of the behemoths of AOP ... Locked up with some of WWE's biggest names via tag action, including Rey Mysterio, Samoa Joe, and Kevin Owens ... Suffered an in-ring injury in March, just prior to COVID-19 slowdown ... Also a pro-kickboxing champ and a professional MMA fighter with a record of 6-2.

250. RHINO (5'10", 295, 25, NL) Briefly held OVW TV title after besting grapplers including Chavo Guerrero and Drew Hernandez in a gauntlet match ... Defeated Masa Kitamiya at an event in Osaka ... Beat fellow ECW alumnus Shane Douglas in singles bout ... Logged wins in Impact over the likes of Madman Fulton and Rohit Raju ... Partnered with Sabu for a tag win over oVe.



PHOTO BY ANDREA KELLAWAY/RING OF HONOR

251. MUSTAFA ALI (5'10", 182, 17, 55) Highest profile matches were a loss to Randy Orton at Hell in a Cell and wins as a member of Team Hogan at Crown Jewel and Team Smackdown at Survivor Series ... Added "Mustafa" back onto his name before disappearing from TV in the fall ... Talented athlete sees a massive drop from last year's ranking due mostly to inactivity.

252. EITA (5'7", 159, 9, 175) Dragon Gate stalwart partnered with Big R Shimizu and won the Open the Twin Gate tag team championship for a fifth time, holding it for 147 days ... After coming up short last year, finally won the King of Gate tournament in 2020, defeating Naruki Doi in the final just before the end of the evaluation period.

253. CARISTICO (5'7", 176, 22, 319) Enjoying more success than he ever did as the original Sin Cara, the CMLL tag team champion claimed the title in November alongside Mistico as part of The Silver and Gold Alliance ... Well-traveled veteran also currently holds the NWA Historic Middleweight title as well as the Lucha Libre Elite middleweight championship.

***254. MAX THE IMPALER** (5'10", 210, 2, NL) Her reign as Ohio Valley Wrestling Women's champion aside, what really lands "The Wasteland Warrior" on our list is her willingness to face all opponents, regardless of size or gender ... Scored wins over Matt Tremont and Jax Dane, among others ... Reaching the semifinals of the CHIKARA Young Lions Cup series was just one highlight of a breakout year.

255. MATT ANGEL (5'10", 189, 10, 288) Quebec native held tag team and singles gold across Canada and had stellar defenses against Mike Bailey in a ladder match for the International Wrestling Syndicate title and Tyson Dux for the North Shore Pro Wrestling championship ... Loves to utilize his Meteora kneedrop and sit-down bouncing Spanish Fly finishers.

256. MARK DAN D-REWS (5'8", 147, 14, 218) Won the NXT U.K. tag team title in his hometown alongside Flash Morgan Webster at TakeOver: Cardiff in a hugely popular moment before dropping the belts to Gallus in October ... Alongside Webster,

was squashed by The Viking Raiders on the November 11 *Raw* in Manchester, England ... Popped up frequently for PROGRESS, despite his busy schedule.

257. CHRIS BROOKES (6'4", 187, 13, 354) "The Calamari Catch King" catapulted to success in Japan ... Won the DDT Universal championship twice during our evaluation period ... Most impressive outing may have come on a Schadenfreude & Friends show on February 18, where Brookes wrestled 20 consecutive 60-second matches in the appropriately titled "Chris Brookes Farewell Gauntlet."

258. FLASH MORGAN WEBSTER (5'8", 156, 11, 320) Mod rocker's blend of technical savvy and high-flying ability helped him capture NXT U.K. tag gold with fellow Welshman Mark Andrews, giving rise to a two-month reign ... Entry in the 2020 Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic was less successful, where the team fell to The BroserWeights in round one.

259. BEN-K (5'9", 218, 4, 273) Currently one-third of the Open the Triangle Gate champions, the highly athletic and highly touted Dragon Gate resident likes to put opponents away with his Ben-K Bomb (gutwrench powerbomb) ... Has found success in singles, tag team, and multi-man bouts well before age 30.

260. TORU YANO (6'1", 254, 18, 277) Veteran New Japan brawler picked up impressive G1 Climax victories over Jon Moxley and Jay White but spent most of the year in tag team action ... Reigned as NEVER openweight six-man tag team champion alongside Ryusuke Taguchi and Togi Makabe ... Still remains loyal to the CHAOS faction he helped form in 2009.



PHOTO BY CHRIS GRASSO

261. RHETT TITUS (6'2", 227, 14, NL) ROH mainstay returns to our rankings after a one-year absence, due mainly to his success outside Ring of Honor ... 119-day reign as Maryland Championship Wrestling heavyweight champ was a much-needed shot in the arm for the journeyman ... Needs to channel his MCW self in ROH.

262. WOLFGANG (6'1", 255, 17, 203) Ended our evaluation period as one half of the NXT U.K. tag champions alongside Gallus teammate Mark Coffey, seeing off challenges by Imperium, Grizzled Young Veterans, and South Wales Subculture ... Allegations made against him as part of the #Speaking-Out movement could leave his future in jeopardy.

263. WILL HOBBS (6'1", 240, 11, NL) Lost APW Worldwide Internet title to Levi Shapiro in 2019 ... Has found success in West Coast Pro, defeating Chris Dickinson and AJ Gray in the past year ... Lost to Orange Cassidy on an episode of AEW *Dark* in July ... Finishes his opponents with a frog splash.

264. MARK COFFEY (6'2", 238, 10, 178) NXT U.K. tag team champion wasn't afraid to go it alone in Insane Championship Wrestling, defeating Andy Wild at Shugg's Hoose Party 6 before losing to Wild in a best-of-three falls match at Fear and Loathing XII ... Glaswegian's biggest success was still undoubtedly alongside Gallus partner Wolfgang for WWE's British brand.

265. JD DRAKE (6'1", 301, 17, 191) "The Blue Collar Badass" waged a brutal war against former partner Anthony Henry in EVOLVE, which saw both men trading wins in an Unsanctioned Street Fight and a no-holds-barred contest ... Came up short in several attempts to grab the EVOLVE championship but always made it a fight ... Old school throwback is reminiscent of Dick Murdoch.

266. TONY DEPPEN (5'7", 165, 11, NL) Profiled as "One To Watch" in the August 2020 issue of *PWI*, the Shamokin, Pennsylvania, native has popped up in over a dozen independent promotions throughout the U.S. and Canada during the year ... Biggest wins came in CHIKARA as part of FIST faction, who made it to the semifinals of the King of Trios tournament.

***267. SUGE D** (6'1", 198, 17, NL) Charismatic journeyman has long been an independent favorite but finally received mainstream recognition in 2020 when his penchant for pineapples drew the ire of Chris Jericho ... Dubbed "Pineapple Pete" in AEW, lost the biggest match of his career to Jericho on the May 13 *Dynamite* ... Certainly doesn't seem to have lost his sense of fun.

268. TK O'RYAN (6'3", 205, 6, 148) Former Kingdom member had a good showing in a singles loss to Rush at Manhattan Mayhem but wrestled primarily in six-man tag matches ... Gave an emotional address to the ROH fans at the end of 2019 to say he was stepping away from the ring due to concussion issues but has vowed to return if his health allows.

269. GEDO (5'8", 190, 31, NL) Creative force behind New Japan Pro-Wrestling continues adding matches to his own already considerable legacy ... Usually represents Bullet Club in multi-man matches against rival factions like CHAOS and Los Ingobernables de Japon ... Somehow also finds time to manage Jay White to great success.

270. ZEUS (5'11", 238, 14, 91) Former All Japan Pro-Wrestling Triple Crown champion came up short in an attempt to regain the title from Kento Miyahara last summer but did manage to add tag team gold to his resume for a fifth time ... Former bodybuilder likes to utilize power moves such as The Jackhammer and his signature Biceps Explosion (Iariat).



PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

***271. MADMAN FULTON (6'8", 315, 10, 173)** Impact Wrestling monster spent much of the year running interference for Ohio Versus Everything boss Sami Callihan ... When he did wrestle, group dysfunction often resulted in losses ... Turned his back on oVe and aligned with Ace Austin, which has improved his fortunes ... Needs to be wary of the self-serving Ace.

272. LEON RUFF (5'7", 150, 3, NL) High-flyer enjoyed a five-month reign as one-half of the EVOLVE tag team champions alongside veteran AR Fox ... Someone in WWE is clearly a fan as Ruff appeared on *Raw*, *Smackdown*, *NXT*, *Main Event*, and *205 Live*. All were losing efforts but an impressive stat for the young grappler nonetheless.

273. RYUSUKE TAGUCHI (5'11", 200, 18, 122) "Funky Weapon" wrestled primarily in tag team and multi-man matches but reached the quarter-finals of the Super J-Cup by himself ... 340-day reign as NEVER openweight six-man tag team champion with Togi Makabe and Toru Yano was the longest ever by a three-man team in New Japan.

274. MISTICO (5'9", 168, 9, 182) Doesn't travel as much as his brothers Rush and Ryu Lee but is no less skilled ... Picked up victories over Mephisto and Gran Guerrero in rare singles outings but shone brightest alongside Caristico in their gravity-defying partnership that claimed CMLL tag team gold in November.

275. TJP (5'10", 174, 22, 227) Former WWE cruiserweight champion has been rebuilding his career in Impact Wrestling ... Also made appearances for New Japan Pro-Wrestling ... Formed a successful tandem with Fallah Bahh in Impact but failed to defeat tag team champions The North in March after a non-title victory two weeks earlier.

276. COUSIN JAKE (6'2", 235, 6, 353) On Impact Wrestling, the stronger, quieter half of The Deaners often ends up dragged into fights his cousin Cody drags him into ... The tandem won the Crossfire tag team title in Ontario, Canada, in November ... Biggest singles victory of the year was over Josh Briggs on a Beyond Wrestling card.

277. JADO (5'10", 218, 31, NL) Former NJPW Junior heavyweight champion represented The Bullet Club in battles against CHAOS and other factions ... Teamed with Chase Owens to down The Rock 'n' Roll Express on New Japan's September 27 show in Lowell, Massachusetts, which

must have been very gratifying for the veteran tag team specialist.

278. ZICKY DICE (6', 223, 5, NL) Previously best known as the frontman of California pop-punk band Heart to Heart, Dice trained to wrestle under Seth Rollins ... The highlight of his year was his upset of Ricky Starks for the NWA TV title ... In June, Dice was granted his NWA release, and the championship was declared vacant.

279. ERICK STEVENS (6'0", 190, 8, NL) After a nine-year break from wrestling, returned in 2019 and won the Black Label Pro heavyweight championship on November 16 ... Debuted for Major League Wrestling on January 11 with a win over Douglas James ... Later that night, joined Tom Lawlor's Team Filthy stable in a beatdown of the Von Erichs.

280. DAVE MASTIFF (5'9", 315, 18, 307) British bruiser waged war against Gallus in NXT U.K. for much of 2019, coming up short in a Last Man Standing bout against Joe Coffey at TakeOver: Cardiff ... TV wins over Kassius Ohno and Kona Reeves helped him secure a shot at WALTER's NXT U.K. title on January 18 in what proved to be a losing effort.



PHOTO BY ANDREA KELLAWAY/IMPACT WRESTLING

281. MOJO RAWLEY (6'4", 265, 7, 256) Abandoned his more serious persona in favor of his old "Get Hyped" attitude once good friend Rob Gronkowski arrived in WWE ... Was pinned by "Gronk" at WrestleMania for the 24/7 title, which can't have done much for their friendship ... Has since reverted back to being serious again ... Needs to find consistency.

282. THOM LATIMER (6'3", 238, 17, NL) The former Bram enjoyed a career resurgence in the National Wrestling Alliance ... Captured the NWA tag team title with Royce Isaacs on night two of the ROH/CMLL Global Wars show in July and held them until being upset by The Rock 'n' Roll Express on the December 3 edition of NWA Powerrr.

283. ROYCE ISAACS (6'1", 242, 6, NL) As part of The Wild Cards with Thom Latimer, spent the fall as NWA tag team champion and backed up NWA champ Nick Aldis when called upon as part of their alliance Strictly Business ... Enjoyed singles success in Championship Wrestling From Hollywood, where he defeated Scorpio Sky for the UWN Television championship.

284. CODY DEANER (6', 212, 20, 363) Rural Canadian beer drinker never backs down from a fight, whether it's in Impact Wrestling alongside Cousin Jake or in Border City Wrestling, where he has held the BCW title since October 2018 ... Perhaps more

impressive are his contributions outside of the ring as part of his "Giv'er for Charity" campaign.

***285. CEDRIC ALEXANDER** (5'10", 205, 11, 59) Too many losses result in a huge drop in our rankings from last year ... Reached the quarterfinals of the King of the Ring tournament before being eliminated by Baron Corbin... Currently trying to turn things around in a tag team with Ricochet, which has the potential to be great.

286. MASAAKI MOCHIZUKI (5'9", 187, 26, NL) Returns to our rankings thanks to a busy year in Pro Wrestling NOAH and Dragon Gate ... Won a battle royal to earn a shot at Ben-K's Open the Dream Gate title but couldn't dethrone the champion ... Teamed with Naomichi Marufuji to win the GHC tag team belts in January.

287. TOGI MAKABE (5'11", 243, 23, 284) Chain-wielding veteran still lariats and suplexes his way to success in New Japan ... Held the NEVER Openweight six-man tag titles for almost a year with Toru Yano and Ryusuke Taguchi ... Appeared mostly in multi-man matches, which seem tailor-made for his wild, brawling style.

288. SHIGEHIRO IRIE (5'8", 253, 12, NL) "Have boots, will travel" seems to have been the motto for the year ... Wrestled for a dozen promotions in Japan between excursions across Europe ... Adept tournament wrestler reached the quarterfinals of the WXW 16 Carat Gold tournament and won the Wrestle-1 Tag League alongside Strong Hearts teammate T-Hawk.

289. DALTON CASTLE (5'11", 217, 12, 161) Former Ring of Honor champion reached the semifinals of the number one contender tournament before falling to eventual winner PCO ... Didn't take kindly to Joe Hendry's claim to be the "Most Entertaining Man In ROH" but has since teamed with the Scot rather successfully as "The Most Entertaining Tag Team."

290. ANTHONY HENRY (5'10", 180, 18, 153) Georgia journeyman held the Full Impact Pro heavyweight championship for an incredible 509 days before dropping it in January ... Reached the semifinals of the WXW World Tag Team Festival with partner JD Drake before turning on Drake in EVOLVE and waging a bitter, personal war against him.



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291. ONEY LORCAN (6'1", 190, 12, 187) Dual-threat competitor split time between 205 Live and NXT's tag team scene ... Failed to wrestle the cruiserweight title away from Drew Gulak at SummerSlam in a hard-hitting effort and came up short alongside partner Danny Burch in a rare NXT U.K. outing against champions Gallus on February 13.

292. MAO (5'10", 180, 5, NL) Japanese high-flyer spread his wings overseas, appearing in the U.K. and Ireland for the first time ... In his home promotion DDT, came close to defeating Masato Tanaka for the KO-D openweight title ... 23-year-old first came to the attention of DDT management by posting videos of his backyard wrestling exploits on YouTube as a teenager.

293. JIMMY LLOYD (5'10", 200, 6, 488) Former CZW Tournament of Death winner continued waging hardcore war throughout the country and picked up a win over Brandon Kirk inside the infamous Cage of Death in CZW on December 14 ... Also picked up victories in Game Changer Wrestling over current Wednesday night stars Joey Janela and Shotzi Blackheart.

***294. DANNY BURCH** (6', 190, 17, 193) Respected Britt has found his niche as a veteran presence on NXT alongside Oney Lorcan ... Fought tag teams on NXT, 205 Live, NXT U.K. and even made it to the finals of the WXW World Tag League tournament in Germany ... Like Lorcan, was game for singles bouts, too, but usually came out on the losing end.

295. MIKE BAILEY (5'8", 174, 14, 214) "Speed-ball" bounced between North America, Europe, and Japan, where he was victorious in the DDT Grand Sumo tournament and reached the finals of the WXW 16 Carat Gold bracket ... Had high profile independent clashes with WALTER, PAC, and SANADA ... Moonlight Express duo with MAO deftly captured the SWE tag team belts in England.

296. DAVEY VEGA (5'11", 180, 14, NL) Held tag team gold in A1 Wrestling, AAW, and EVOLVE during our evaluation period alongside Besties in the World partner Mat Fitchett ... Never appeared out of his depth in tag outings against Impact Wrestling tandems like The North and The Rascalz when they clashed on various independent shows.

297. MAT FITCHETT (6', 173, 11, NL) "The Gunslinger" and partner Davey Vega cemented their status as one of the independents' premier pairs with an EVOLVE tag team title victory over AR Fox and Leon Ruff ... Their most unique moment might have been making Session Moth Martina an unofficial "Bestie" for a six-person victory over The Rascalz on an OTT card in Belfast.

298. BATEMAN (6'3", 200, 19, 458) Sinister grappler made a violent splash in Ring of Honor in December, assisting VINCENT in a brutal post-match beatdown of Matt Taven at Final Battle ... Aligned with the former in cult-like faction The Righteous and scored a victory over Dalton Castle and Joe Hendry at ROH's Free Enterprise show on February 9.

299. LAREDO KID (5'7", 180, 17, 199) Reigned as AAA Cruiserweight champion for our entire evaluation period but took time to pop up in MLW for several matches ... Scored a victory over Ace Austin on an AAW card on August 29 in Chicago ... Aerial artist utilizes the 450 splash and corkscrew plancha to great success.

300. EL HIJO DEL VIKINGO (5'6", 157, 7, NL) Viking-inspired luchador scored a victory over Josh Alexander on the January 17 edition of Impact Wrestling ... Represented AAA in a victory over MLW trio Injustice on MLW Fusion TV in March ... Greatest accomplishments came on Mexican soil, where he claimed the AAA Trios championship with partners Golden Magic and Myzteziz Jr.



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301. YOSHITATSU (6'1", 224, 18, 356) Current reigning AJPW Gaora TV champion with partner Kento Miyahara challenged Shuji Ishikawa and Suwama for the All Japan tag team title and Isami Kodaka and Yuko Miyamoto for the All Asia tag title ... Had an okay showing in the Real World Tag League 2019 with partner Joel Redman.

302. MYZTEZIZ JR. (5'7", 154, 7, NL) Became AAA Trios champion as a member of Los Jinetes del Aire with El Hijo del Vikingo and Golden Magic in August ... Defended title against Jordan Oliver, Kotto Brazil, and Myron Reed in March in MLW ... Also faced Ortiz and Santana, Arez and Daga, and The Lucha Bros.

303. MATT CROSS (5'7", 183, 21, NL) The former Lucha Underground Trios champion has been busy collecting singles prizes all around the world, including the Olde Wrestling (Ohio) title, the SWE King of Switzerland title, and the WPE (France) title ... Stateside, wrestled former NWA TV champ Ricky Starks to a time-limit draw back in January.

304. GOLDEN MAGIC (5'10", 185, 12, NL) Previously the third luchador to don the Octagon Jr. moniker, the son of Mexican grappler Mr. Magia has stood toe-to-toe in AAA with Drago, Lizmark Jr., El Hijo de LA Park, and LA Park Jr. ... Scored a victory over Black Taurus, TJP, and Trey in Impact Wrestling in August.

305. KOTTO BRAZIL (5'3", 143, 5, NL) Up-and-coming, lightning-quick competitor is a two-time ACW (Florida) cruiserweight champ ... Faced Jon Davis in November for the FIP Florida Heritage title ... Trained by ROH's Jay Lethal ... Wields mix of impressive aerial maneuvers and some mat-based submissions ... Recently left MLW, where he was part of Injustice faction.

306. JOHN SILVER (5'7", 178, 13, 390) Known for tagging with Alex Reynolds as members of The Dark Order in AEW, "The Meat Man" boasts singles victories in CZW over Conor Claxton and in Beyond Wrestling over Eddie Kingston, Kris Statlander, and Christian Casanova ... Appeared on *Smackdown* in a losing effort to Heavy Machinery in September.

***307. TRACY WILLIAMS** (6'2", 195, 11, 154) "Hot Sauce" remains a dependable technical wrestler in ROH as a member of Lifeblood, although he lacks consistent wins ... Challenged for the ROH TV belt on three occasions during the evaluation period ... Participated in a 20-man battle royal for a shot at the ROH title back in February.

308. GRAN GUERRERO (5'9", 209, 12, 375) The "Great Warrior" challenged Niebla Roja for the CMLL Light Heavyweight title in October ... Skilled luchador scored victories over Mistico, El Terrible, and Valiente ... Alongside Ultimo Guerrero as Los Guerreros Laguneros, was disqualified in the final round of the February 2020 Torneo De Parejas Familiares.

309. EUFORIA (6'0", 209, 30, NL) The veteran CMLL star, along with El Soberano Jr., placed third in the NJPW-sponsored 2020 Family Tag Tournament in January ... Held the CMLL tag team championship with Gran Guerrero for 154 days ... Is currently a CMLL Trios champion with Gran Guerrero and Ultimo Guerrero.

310. PAUL ROBINSON (5'6", 141, 16, NL) The lean and vicious England native won the PROGRESS Proteus Championship in September and has successfully defended it against the likes of Travis Banks, Timothy Thatcher, and Danny Jones ... Was a former tag team partner of Will Ospreay ... Employs a leaping double-foot curb stomp as a finisher.



PHOTO BY ANDREA KELLAWAY/RING OF HONOR

311. COLBY CORINO (5'7, 161, 11, NL) Second-gen wrestler looking to add his own contributions to the Corino legacy ... Current AML Prestige champion and PWF Universal six-man tag champ with partners Lance Lude and Rob Killjoy as The Ugly Ducklings ... Defeated Homicide for the Capitol Wrestling Title in December.

312. ALEX REYNOLDS (6'4", 196, 14, 393) Currently teams with John Silver as members of The Dark Order in AEW, which makes it easy to overlook his matches this year elsewhere ... Teamed with Alex Keaton to face Heavy Machinery on *Smackdown* in September ... Also challenged for the NYWC Fusion title in December.

313. THE BLADE (6'0", 220, 20, 229) Has fallen slightly since last year's rankings despite his tag partner The Butcher rising ... Former Pepper Parks adds charisma, speed, and scalpel sharp strikes to the tag team tandem ... Win-loss record in AEW's tag team division is well above .500, despite some defeats by more established teams.

314. JACK EVANS (5'8", 169, 20, 239) In-ring prowess greatly matured but struggles (with Angelico) in standing out in AEW's blockbuster tag team division ... Tag expertise extends to indie scene, where he competed alongside Aerostar, El Hijo de Dos Caras, and Flamita ... Challenged The Lucha Bros. for the House of Glory tag belts in September.

315. THE BUTCHER (6'3", 245, 5, 433) Andy Williams' partnership with The Blade is ar-

guably one of the stronger pairings in the bedrock of AEW's tag division ... During the evaluation period, the team has also faced The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Team Pazuzu, and Eddie Kingston & Homicide ... Has 10-6 career record in AEW.

316. ANGELICO (6'3, 198, 13, 220) South African high-flyer comprises one-half of AEW's The Hybrid 2 with Jack Evans ... Challenged John Klinger for the GFW (Germany) title ... Has an impressive array of overlooked talents buried in the depth and booking of AEW's tag division ... His stellar wrestling abilities often outshine his under-rated charisma.

317. TITAN (5'7", 185, 12, 297) Defeated El Soberano Jr. to win the CMLL Welterweight title ... Eliminated by El Hijo del Villano II and Templario from the Mexican National Tag Team Tournament in February ... With Volador Jr., defeated Jushin "Thunder Liger" and Yuya Uemura twice during the NJPW Road to Power Struggle 2019.

***318. SOLO DARLING** (5'3", 130, 11, NL) Indie powerhouse made her presence known in Beyond Wrestling, SHIMMER, and CHIKARA ... Entered SHIMMER title #1 contendership scramble in December, won by Kellyanne ... Won a ten-person ladder match at Beyond's Americanrana to capture the Feast Championship Wrestling title ... Tags with Willow Nightingale as The Bird and The Bee.

319. SHAWN DEAN (5'10", 195, 3, NL) Prior to his recent stint in AEW, "The Captain" trained under AR Fox and earned his stripes in promotions across the southeast such as Georgia's ACTION Wrestling and Nashville's Southern Underground Pro ... Currently holds the GPW Southern States Title ... Chicago native's style combines technical prowess with impressive speed.

320. CHUCK MAMBO (6'3", 196, 7, NL) The "Surfing and Wrestling Sensation" from Cornwall, England is a former Riptide Brighton champion ... Has faced off against the likes of Rampage Brown, Jordan Devlin, and Spike Trivet ... Is a former four-time ATTACK! (Wales) 24/7 champion ... Forms cleverly dubbed tag team (Escaping the Midcard) with TK Cooper.



PHOTO BY JAYLEE PHOTOGRAPHY

321. SHANE MERCER (5'11", 209, 13, 491) "The Iron Demon" currently reigns as the WTF (Indiana) Champion and Resistance (Illinois) heavyweight champ ... Also won the 2020 EWE Brass Monkey Tournament ... Eliminated from the IWA Mid-South Ted Petty Invitational 2019 by Fred Yehi in the first round ... Fought Jake Carter in July to a no contest.

322. JASON CADE (5'9", 176, 8, NL) Brash, cocky young upstart also known as Jay Summers swaggered into the mainstream spotlight with recent appearances in AEW against Marko Stunt, Orange Cassidy, and in WWE against Aleister Black ... Current PWR (Iowa) Tag Team Champion with partner Rich Swann as "The Crew" ... PWX champ was trained by Norman Smiley.

323. KEKOA (6'0", 189, 12, 445) "The Flyin' Hawaiian Warrior" currently reigns as MCW heavyweight champion, having beaten Rhett Titus and Brandon Scott in a 3-way match in January ... Wrestled in six-way final of the 2019 Shane Shamrock Memorial Cup ... Also owns Workrate Entertainment, parent company of Workrate Wrestling Academy (Pennsylvania).

324. WILLOW NIGHTINGALE (5'6", 5, NL) Trained by Mike Mondo and Bull James at NYWC Academy ... Comprises one-half of popular indie tandem The Bird and The Bee (with Solo Darling) ... Three-time NYWC Starlet champ reigned as CHIKARA Campeonato de Parejas when the company ceased operations ... Infectious smile, but gets it done in the ring.

325. MATTHEW JUSTICE (6', 220, 14, NL) Risk-taking "One Man Militia" is a two-time AIW Intense champion with successful title defenses against Dominic Garrini, Mance Warner, Joshua Bishop, and Tom Lawlor ... Wrestles a hard-hitting, brawler style with an ability to execute high-risk maneuvers gracefully for an athlete his size ... Part of influential Second Gear Crew (SGC).

***326. SPIKE TRIVET** (6'0", 160, 4, NL) "Spoiled Rotten" Cambridge-born NORTH Wrestling champion of more than 400 days ... Reigning Riptide Brighton champion beat Chuck Mambo for the honors ... Successful title defenses over Mark Haskins and Jordon Breaks ... Took part in CATCH Pro Great British Heritage Tournament final, ultimately coming up short to Joe Nelson.

327. THOMAS SANTELL (6'1", 231, 19, NL) Enjoying an exciting second act ... One-half of oddball duo Nerder Death Kill with Nick Gage, Beyond Wrestling's "Ovaltine Dream" is barely recognizable as former WWE Heart Throbs tag team grappler Antonio Thomas ... Solid catch wrestling athlete fared well against foes including Eddie Kingston, Mike Quackenbush, and Petey Williams.

328. TIMMY LOU RETTON (5'8", 233, 6, NL) Dubiously hailed as professional wrestling's only male gymnast, "The Excellence Of Elegance" brings jaw-dropping agility, power, and precision to Gym Nasty Boyz tag team ... Current FEST Wrestling tag team champion with victories over Tommy Dreamer and CW Anderson ... Has won more than 30 championships in men's gymnastics.

329. WHITE MIKE (6'1", 225, 13, NL) The charismatic North Carolinian "Sultan Of Stank" mixes old school grappling and hijinks as half of The Gym Nasty Boyz with Timmy Lou Retton ... Tag team champion in multiple promotions, including AML, WrestleCade, and ISW (Canada) ... Boasts victories over The Dawson Brothers and The Twister Sisterz.

330. CALEB KONLEY (6'0", 207, 15, 324) Stellar performances with the NWA, PWX (North Carolina), and PWE (Maine) overshadowed by trademark scuffle with AEW's FTR over tag team name "The Revolt!" ... Continues to wrestle as Suicide in various independent promotions ... PWX tag champion with Zane Riley ... Challenged Carlito for the PWE United States title.



PHOTO BY ROB BRAZIER



331. DOMINIC GARRINI (5'11", 207, 4, NL) MLW's resident "Bone Collector" holds a purple belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, reigning alongside "Violence Is Forever" partner Kevin Ku as SUP (Tennessee) tag team champs ... Joined Tom Lawlor's Team Filthy in losing effort against Marshall and Ross Von Erich, Killer Kross, and Davey Boy Smith Jr. in February.

332. SILAS YOUNG (5'11", 220, 18, 216) "The Last Real Man In Professional Wrestling" spent majority of evaluation period with "2 Guys, 1 Tag" partner Josh Woods trading victories and losses against The Bouncers, Jay Lethal & Jonathan Gresham, Dalton Castle & Joe Hendry ... Came up short against Rush for ROH heavyweight title in October 2019.

333. MANSOOR (6'0", 196, 5, 441) Current WWE 205 Live superstar scored victories over Cesaro and Dolph Ziggler at Saudi Arabia PPVs ... Despite having noteworthy victories between NXT house shows and EVOLVE over AR Fox, Dexter Lumis, Austin Theory, Shane Thorne, and Dorian Mak, still needs to find his breakout main roster match.

334. EL SOBERANO JR. (5'11", 172, 13, 385) The young *tecnico* wrestled more than 100 times for CMLL, NJPW, and ROH (amongst other promotions) during the evaluation period ... Defeated Rocky Romero to advance in the Super J-Cup 2019, but lost to Caristico in the quarterfinal ... Challenged

Titan for the CMLL welterweight title in December.

335. PINKIE SANCHEZ (5'11", 169, 16, NL) The wily, charismatic, reigning PWM (New Jersey) champ had regular jaunts in GCW and Beyond Wrestling ... Squared off against Joe Gacy, Super Crazy, Teddy Hart, Jordan Oliver, and Saieve Al Sabah during the evaluation period ... One-half of Team Pazuzu with Chris Dickinson ... Dons a creepy, demonic mask.

336. RIDGE HOLLAND (6'1", 260, 4, NL) The West Yorkshire native and former rugby player continued to hone his skills mostly at NXT house shows with wins over Austin Theory, Denzel Dejournette, and Joseph Conners ... Participated in #1 contendership battle royal for NXT U.K. championship in March ... Faced WALTER in dark match on same show.

337. DARIUS CARTER (6'1", 187, 11, NL) "Wrestling's Richest Prize" de-

feated Sonny Kiss for WOW heavyweight title in August last year ... Current BCI heavyweight champion ... Pulled off surprising victories over Killer Kross and Davey Boy Smith Jr. ... Wrestles a hybrid style: part old-school American heel, part British catch wrestling.

338. LOW KI (5'8", 174, 21, 65) The widely respected "World Warrior" has dropped significantly in the rankings since last year, mostly due to a dearth of activity during the evaluation period ... Still, the veteran scored victories over Tom Lawlor, Timothy Thatcher, Joey Janela, and Brian Pillman Jr. ... Recorded a loss to Davey Boy Smith Jr.

339. SAL RINAURO (5'9", 183, 22, NL) The former Anarchy Wrestling Triple Crown champ squared off against NWA top stars Colt Cabana, Ken Anderson, and Aron Stevens ... Participated twice in NWA TV title qualifying matches ... Tagged with Michael Stevens to face ROH's The Horror Kings, Bateman and VINCENT, for a televised match in January.

***340. TAIJI ISHIMORI** (5'4", 165, 19, 104) "The Bone Soldier's" turbulent year saw stellar wins and significant losses ... Placed third in the 2019 Super Junior Tag League ... Faced Kazuchika Okada in the New Japan Pro Cup 2020 quarterfinal ... Defeated by Roppongi 3K for the IWGP junior heavyweight tag title (held with El Phantasma).

341. DANIEL MAKABE (6'1", 205, 13, NL) "The Wrestling Genius" continues to make strides on the independent scene as a deceptively gifted technical wrestler ... Defeated Timothy Thatcher in a rubber match for 3-2-1 Battle! in July 2019 ... Winner of the WXW AMBITION-12 tournament in March ... Employs the Cattle Mutilation as a finishing hold.

342. TYSON DUX (5'11", 198, 23, 303) Canadian veteran and former WWE Cruiserweight Classic competitor made major waves during the evaluation period by portraying Chris Benoit in the season 2 premiere of Vice's *Dark Side of the Ring* ... Current reigning AWE (Ontario) heavyweight champ ... Comprises "The Pillars" with TARIK, Sebastian Suave, and Brent Banks.

343. BAD LUCK FALE (6'4", 343, 9, 139) Despite failing to place high in Block A of the G1 Climax, "The Underboss" (and O.G. Bullet Club member) scored victories over KENTA, Hiroshi Tanahashi, EVIL, and SANADA ... Also had middle-of-the-road showing during the NJPW World Tag League 2019 with Bullet Club stablemate Chase Owens.

344. KOBE DURST (5'9", 194, 7, NL) High-flying Toronto, Ontario, native known as "DiamondTiger" and "The Ram" continues to build his resume with victories over Ethan Page, The Butcher and The Blade, Brian Pillman Jr., and Stu Grayson ... Maintains a regular presence with Freelance Wrestling and Black Label Pro, where he is a former heavyweight champion.

345. CHRIS HERO (6'4", 268, 21, 295) Recently known as Kassius Ohno in NXT and NXT U.K., the catch wrestling vet worked best with upcoming talent like Bronson Reed, Mansoor, and Isaiah Scott on house show circuit ... Participated in #1 contendership battle royal for NXT U.K. title ... Victim of WWE's April 2020 roster purge.

346. CHRISTIAN CASANOVA (5'10", 176, 6, NL) Northeast Wrestling's cocky reigning Live champion boasts wins over Tony Deppen, Flip Gordon, Jimmy Rave, and Jessicka Havok ... Two-time Chaotic Wrestling heavyweight champ ... Employs an innovative, lightning-fast strike and suplex-based grappling style ... Memorable set of matches against Myron Reed.

347. KEVIN BENNETT (6'0", 152, 9, 400) Smash Wrestling champ has battled WALTER, Wardlow, Andrew Everett, and The Dark Order (Evil Uno and Stu Grayson) ... High-flyer similar in body and style to Flash Morgan Webster, but trades the snazzy swagger for technical savvy ... Nicknamed "The Remix," also works as a rapper, producer, and audio engineer.

348. KC NAVARRO (5'5", 134, 5, 482) The "Truly Blessed" high-flying wrestler utilized his high-risk, cruiserweight style to best Dan Maff and win the WHAT (Rhode Island) title in October ... Also defeated AR Fox to become the CZW Wired champion in February ... Appeared on Impact Wrestling in a taped skit featuring Moose.

***349. BLACK TAURUS** (5'10", 200, 14, NL) The surprisingly agile and powerful "big man" luchador made waves outside of Mexico's AAA during the evaluation period ... Earlier matches against Cody Rhodes definitely played a key role in his American market crossover ... Voz Ultra champion has mixed it up with Moose, Rhyno, Brian Cage, and Jeff Cobb.

350. KEVIN KU (5'10", 200, 6, NL) Alabama native is a well-rounded technician known for his vicious strikes and submission arsenal ... SUP (Tennessee) tag champion with Dominic Garrini ... Participated in the WXW 2019 World Tag Team Tournament in October ... Signature move is a high-angle single leg Boston Crab with stomps to his opponent's head.

PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD



***351. O'SHAY EDWARDS**

(6'3", 235, 5, NL) "The Big Bad Kaiju" closed out his 2019 by winning the Prime Time Pro Wrestling championship ... Had a handful of successful defenses over such competitors as former champion Breau Keller and Suge D ... Successfully tagged with The Sickness at a Future of Honor event ... Competed in Beyond Wrestling's Discovery Gauntlet.

352. TARIK (5'10", 189, 12, NL)

The plucky Ontarian layered on the gold during the second half of 2019, picking up his second Border

Town Pro Wrestling Niagara Regional championship, the Pro Wrestling Eclipse heavyweight championship, and the North Shore Pro Wrestling tag team championship, defending the latter under "Freebird Rules" with Sebastian Suave and Tyson Dux.

353. JON DAVIS (6', 255, 18, NL) Veteran of almost two decades has spent the last year dominating Full Impact Pro, winning his second FIP heavyweight title on top of successfully defending his FIP Florida Heritage championship ... Started the year off strong with wins in EVOLVE, beating Vinny Pacifico in a singles bout and tagging with Denzel Dejournette to defeat the The Skulk.

354. I CALLED MANDERS (6'1", 229, 3, NL)

A true wrestling workhorse, Manders ended his 2019 year competing in over 100 matches ... Held SCW Pro Wrestling's Iowa Wrestling and heavyweight championships ... Became the number-one contender for the SUP Bonestorm championship ... Unsuccessfully challenged for the IWTW heavyweight championship against WARHORSE ... Competed in Game Changer Wrestling's Acid Cup 2, losing to Nick Gage.

355. MATT MAKOWSKI (5'11", 218, 1, NL)

"Snapmare" Matt ended his rookie year with a robust run in Beyond Wrestling's "Discovery Gauntlet," winning two matches before losing his third to veteran Gary Jay ... Defeated CHIKARA original Jigsaw at National Pro Wrestling Day 2020 ... Successful in the first round of King Of Trios 2019 with The Crucible, but lost in the quarterfinal.

356. TOMMY DREAMER (6'2", 255, 31, 409)

The hardcore legend entered his third decade as a pro by feuding with Ohio Versus Everything ... Traded tag team victories against oVe mem-



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bers, partnering with Tessa Blanchard and Rhino ... Fought Sami Callihan in a pair of no-DQ matches, losing both ... Teamed with Rhino to challenge The North for the Impact tag team title at the Impact Wrestling/CWFH supershow.

357. DASHER HATFIELD (6'1", 218, 13, NL) "The Ol' Timey King of Swing" put in the work this year, holding on to the CHIKARA Grand championship for the entire evaluation period ... With CHIKARA formally dissolved, he could be the final holder of the title ... Lost to UltraMantis Black in a brutal TLC match at LVAC Holiday Hangout 2019.

358. MATT TREMONT (5'10", 238, 13, NL) As the defending ISW Inter Species champion, The Bulldozer attempted to add to his belt collection, challenging for the CZW Wired and heavyweight championships against Jordan Oliver and Joe Gacy, respectively ... He came up short both times ... Made his Korakuen Hall debut, wrestling for FREEDOMS and BJW in multi-man tag victories.

359. TRAVIS HUCKABEE (5'8", 180, 3, NL) The two-time CHIKARA Campeones de Parejas had a healthier run his second time around, holding the title alongside his partner Tony Deppen for nearly 200 days before losing to The Bird and The Bee in a best-of-three falls match ... Made it to the King of Trios semifinals with FIST stablemates.

360. LINC DORADO (5'7", 169, 13, 174) With fellow Lucha House Party members, Dorado has been victorious in several multi-man tag matches ... Unsuccessfully challenged for the Smackdown tag championship alongside Gran Metalik at Elimination Chamber 2020 in its namesake match ... Teamed again with Metalik in a losing effort for the title in a fatal four-way at Money In The Bank 2020.

361. ORLANDO COLON (6' 200, 15, 151) Previously known as Epico in WWE, Colon was released by the company in April ... Current reigning World Wrestling Council Universal heavyweight champion with successful defenses against Eli Drake and former champion Gilbert ... Current Coastal Championship Wrestling tag team champ with cousin Eddie (FKA Primo) ... They defeated Matt Striker and Will Austin for the straps.

362. GRAN METALIK (5'9", 176, 15, 168) The Lucha House Party member continued his mission to win tag team gold throughout the year, teaming with Lince Dorado to compete in Smackdown tag title matches at both Money In The Bank and Elimination Chamber ... Beat former tag champions John Morrison and The Miz on Smackdown in April.

363. DARIUS LOCKHART (5'10", 206, 7, NL) As the reigning and defending Viral Pro Wrestling champion, "The Revolutionary" has set a record with the strap, holding it for an unprecedented 570+ days ... Challenged for the SWE Speed King title in a three-way match, falling short against defending champion Ricky Knight Jr ... Wrestled Hikuleo in a losing effort at RevPro.

364. EL TERRIBLE (6'1", 231, 28, 438) Near-ling his third year as the Mexican National heavyweight champ, this "Ingobernable" has successfully defended his title against the likes of Valiente and Diamante Azul ... Teamed with Shingo Takagi in NJPW's World Tag League, finishing with six wins and nine losses ... Scored victories over members of Bullet Club and Suzuki-gun in the tournament.

***365. STILL LIFE WITH APRICOTS AND PEARS** (6'1", 189, 3, NL) The self-proclaimed "Exhibition of Intrigue," Still Life with Apricots and Pears enjoyed a healthy run with the seminal CHIKARA Young Lions Cup for over 300 days, vacating it for the 2020 tournament in January ... They would go on to beat Icarus in a 60-second Iron-Person match later in the year.

366. BREAU X KELLER (6'1", 191, 4, 478) "Jockzilla" saw a rough end to 2019, losing both his Atomic Championship Wrestling heavyweight title and the Prime Time Pro Wrestling championship in the fall ... Tagged with Isaiah Frazier to defeat The Red-nexicans at ACTION Wres-

ting ... Wrestled indie journeyman Tim Donst to a loss at ACW's "Come As You Are."

367. JINDER MAHAL (6'5" 238, 18, 143) The former WWE World champion falls further in the rankings for yet another year, unable to replicate his previous success ... Holds a pair of wins over Akira Tozawa on both *Raw* and *Main Event*, the former match lasting slightly over a minute and half ... Beat NXT call-up Denzel Dejournette on *Main Event*.

368. LA BESTIA DEL RING (5'11", 231, 26, NL) The father of current lucha greats Rush, Ryu Lee, and Mistico, La Bestia del Ring enjoyed a banner year, highlighted by winning the KAOZ Trios championship alongside LA Park Jr. and El Hijo de LA Park ... Found success in multi-man matches as a member of AAA's notorious Los Ingobernables faction.

369. SANTOS ESCOBAR (5'11", 198, 20, 352) Formerly known as El Hijo del Fantasma, Escobar unmasked and renamed himself upon beating Drake Maverick in the NXT Interim Cruiserweight championship tournament ... Defeated both Jack Gallagher and Akira Tozawa to advance to the final ... Took a loss to Isaiah Scott in said tournament ... Holds a pair of victories over NXT newcomer Jake Atlas.

370. D-ROGUE (6'2", 205, 4, NL) Affectionately known as "The World's Tallest Cruiserweight," D-Rogue has worn Hoodslam's Best Athlete In The East Bay championship since January, when he beat Matt Carlos ... Held the East Bay Pro Wrestling title for nearly 200 days before losing to Fabuloso Fabricio ... Won his second Intergalactic tag team Championship with faction-mates in Da Squaaaad.



PHOTO BY JAY LEE PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO BY JOEL WESTENDORF



371. KAITO ISHIDA (5'8", 154, 5, NL) With well over 200 days under his belt as Dragon Gate's Open the Brave Gate champion, Kaito Ishida has successfully defended his title against the likes of Susumu Yokosuka, Jason Lee, Genki Horiguchi, and Keisuke Okuda ... He advanced to semifinals of the King Of Gate 2020 tournament, losing to Naruki Doi.

372. DARK SHEIK (5'8", 161, 15, NL) Partnering with Juice Lee, Hoodslam founder DARK Sheik finished 2019 with her second reign as Intergalactic tag team champion, dethroning Da Squaaaad in November ... Had two successful defenses, including a three-way match against The Stoner Brothers and the team of Ruby Raze and Vipress ... Lost the title back to Da Squaaaad in late February.

373. RIDDICK MOSS (6'2", 246, 5, NL) Highlight of his year came from his March 3 upset win over Ricochet on *Raw* ... Holds the distinction of being the third-longest reigning WWE 24/7 champion ... Lost the championship to R-Truth while out for a jog ... Tagged briefly with Dorian Mak as The Outliers.

***374. RUBY RAZE** (5'10", 225, 7, NL) In a year where she captured three women's titles, "The Equal Opportunity Ass Kicker" has also thrived in intergender action ... Defeated Brian Cage and Chris Bey in a triple-threat match to win Rogue Wrestling's Thanksgiving Throwdown tournament ... Holds wins over Sumie Sakai and Shotzi Blackheart.

375. MARK DAVIS (6'4", 242, 13, NL) "Dunkzilla" notably teams with Kyle Fletcher as one-half of Aussie Open ... They formerly held both the PROG-

and Hallowicked ... Successfully tagged with Breau Keller to defeat The Gym Nasty Boyz and Rednaxicans.

377. PB SMOOTH (6'9", 260, 4, 379) The former AIW Absolute champ was able to avenge his loss by capturing the Revenge Pro title several months later, beating current AEW wrestler Wardlow ... Lost the strap two months into his reign in his first defense to Bill Collier ... Started off 2020 with singles wins over O'Shay Edwards and Joshua Bishop.

378. KYLE FLETCHER (6'4", 235, 6, NL) "Aussie Arrow" has transformed himself into a tag team specialist ... Held the PROGRESS and WXW tag titles alongside Mark Davis as Aussie Open ... Also captured FCP tandem gold, partnering with Chris Brookes as Schadenfreude ... Challenged Guerrillas of Destiny for the IWGP tag belts in August in a losing effort.

379. EL LINDAMAN (5'3", 176, 6, NL) Junior heavyweight started off strong this past spring, winning the KO-D six-man tag team title alongside Strong Hearts stablemate T-Hawk and their partner Tetsuya Endo, defeating ALL OUT ... The trio would eventually lose the championship to Eruption in June ... Challenged for the KO-D tag title with T-Hawk, losing to current champions Nautilus.

380. ARTURO RUAS (5'11", 220, 4, 483) Splitting his time between EVOLVE and NXT, Arturo Ruas spent the greater part of the year wrestling against a "who's who" of opponents ... Racked up singles wins against such notable grapplers as John Silver and Timothy Thatcher ... He also holds a DQ victory over "The Mad King" Eddie Kingston.

RESS and WXW tag titles, defending against teams such as The WorkHorsemen and Aero Star and Daga ... Held onto the Fight Club: PRO Championship before vacating it in September.

376. ISIAH FRAZIER (6', 209, 4, NL) Entering his fourth year as a pro, "The Gifted" Isaiah Frazier closed out 2019 by defeating Ty Thomas to win the Old Time Wrestling Classic championship ... Picked up singles wins over indie veterans Fred Yehi

381. TRE' LAMAR (6', 185, 3, NL) Headed into the second half of 2019 with some hardware, holding on to the MAW No Limits championship for an unprecedented 238 days ... Vacated the title in November ... Reigned as Black Label Pro tag team champion with Jake Lander as Blood Diamond, eventually losing the straps to Danhausen, Ethan Page, and Swoggle.

382. RJ CITY (6', 200, 14, 226) The indie veteran found success during the latter half of 2019, winning the Empire State Wrestling tag team title with his partner Gregory Iron as Handcrafted ... Successfully defended the belts against High Seas and the team of Anthony Gaines and Kevin Bennett ... Hosts the popular YouTube series *RJ Makes Coffee in His Underwear*.

383. THE OJMO (5'11", 165, 3, NL) The "Master of the Half Crab" started 2020 off strong, beating El Phantasma for the RevPro Undisputed British cruiserweight title in February ... Lost the Battle Pro Wrestling championship to David Francisco in October 2019 after several successful defenses ... One of the U.K.'s most upwardly mobile high-flyers.

384. SHOTARO ASHINO (5'9, 187, 5, 270) With his partner Yusuke Kodama, Shotaro Ashino held the WRESTLE-1 tag title for a record-breaking 227 days, losing it to the final champions Daiki Inaba and Koji Doi ... Challenged Suwama for the AJPW Triple Crown Championship in a losing effort following one of the most brutal powerbombs ever.

385. LEE MORIARTY (6', 185, 5, 460) "The Apex Of Combat" jumps nearly one hundred spaces this year, owing to his successful singles run ... Holds two victories over Alex Shelley, including a submission bout in AIW ... Beat Jason Kincaid, Tre' LaMar, and RC Dupree ... Tagged with Wheeler YUTA as Rush Hour in a losing effort against Violence Is Forever.

386. WHEELER YUTA (6', 189, 5, NL) One of PWI's "25 Under 25," Wheeler YUTA spent the past year proving why he belongs on that list ... Holds singles wins over Kimber Lee, Fred Yehi, and Ace Austin ... Unsuccessfully challenged for the IWTW Championship, losing to Warhorse in a three-way match ... Teamed successfully with Leyla Hirsch as Legit Yoots.



PHOTO BY ROB BRAZIER

***387. CASSIUS** (5'8", 150, 6, NL) "The Neon Explosion" enjoyed a successful second-half of 2019, becoming the first ever Riptide Wrestling Pride of Brighton champion ... Beat Kurtis Chapman to win the inaugural tournament after defeating Chakara in the semifinal ... Defended the title against Cara Noir and Rebel Kinney.

388. MAN LIKE DEREISS (5'11", 205, 2, NL) British competitor started off 2020 well, winning both the Fight Club: PRO and ATTACK! tag team championships alongside his partner Dan Moloney ... Beat Rhio to win the Tidal Championship Wrestling Open title ... Debuted in NXT U.K., losing to Pretty Deadly in tag-team action.

389. TREVOR MURDOCH (6'5", 242, 22, NL) 2019 saw "The Outlaw's" return to mainstream wrestling, debuting on an episode of NWA's *Powerrrr* with an impressive win over Jocephus ... Fared well in the NWA TV title tournament before losing in the final to Ricky Starks ... Challenged for the EAW heavyweight championship, falling short in a four-way match.

390. JOE HENDRY (6'1", 229, 7, 321) Edinburgh native made big moves in 2019, signing with Ring of Honor in August ... Successfully teamed with Dalton Castle with victories over Lifeblood and The Briscoe Brothers ... Came up short challenging Shane Taylor for the ROH TV title ... Captured Discovery Wrestling's Y Division championship last fall.

***391. DAN MOLONEY** (5'10", 216, 7, NL) Teaming with Man Like DeReiss, "Drilla" captured tag gold for Fight Club: PRO and ATTACK! ... Won a four-way match against Chuck Mambo, Jordan Devlin, and Trent Seven to become the Fight Club: PRO heavyweight champ ... Holds a singles win over Rey Horus ... Made his NXT U.K. debut in March.

392. AC MACK (6'1", 187, 4, NL) The inaugural ACTION champion came out strong this last year as the "Mack Of All Trades" continued to add to the title's legacy ... Boasting 560+ days as champ, he holds successful defenses over Fred Yehi and Cain Justice ... Beat Brett Ison for the SUP Bonestorm title in October.

393. ARIK CANNON (5'9", 202, 18, 369) Nearing his second decade of wrestling professionally, "The Anarchist" beat Darin Corbin for the Heavy On Wrestling Undisputed title in July ... Held the Steel Domain Wrestling tag team Championship with AJ LaRock, eventually ceding the straps to Paul Virk and Ryan Slade in January.

394. EL MESIAS (6', 244, 23, NL) The Puerto Rican veteran continues to find success, holding the KAOZ Mixed tag title for nearly 300 days alongside partner Christi Jaynes before losing the belts in May of 2020 ... Had a healthy reign with the PCW ULTRA heavyweight championship before losing it to Alexander Hammerstone.

395. CHUCK O'NEIL (6'2", 185, 5, NL) The former *Ultimate Fighter* contestant formed strong bonds and even stronger enemies this year ... Teamed with Violence Is Forever to form Legit Legends, combating their rivals in Team Pazuzu ... Won the PVP tag title with Mike Gamble in September ... Lost the TRP heavyweight belt to Nico Silva that same month.

396. ATTICUS COGAR (5'10", 161, 5, NL) Cleveland native spent nearly half the year as a double champion, wearing singles gold for Premier Championship Wrestling and MEGA Championship Wrestling ... Lost the PCW title to N8 Mattson after a dual defense in the same night ... Challenged Nick Gage for the GCW title in a losing effort.

397. WARDLOW (6'2", 249, 6, NL) 2019 proved the biggest year of Wardlow's career yet after he signed with All Elite Wrestling ... Quickly took on the role of MJF's bodyguard ... Wrestled his debut AEW contest against Cody Rhodes, losing to "The American Nightmare" in a brutal steel cage match.

PHOTO BY ROB BRAZIER



398. AVALANCHE (5'11", 295, 10, NL) Native Austrian had a good year, picking up his first of two WXW Shotgun title wins in September ... Had a robust run with defenses over such wrestlers as Flamita and Jay Skillet, eventually dropping the belt to the latter ... Regained the title in February, but dropped it to Alexander Wolfe in March.

399. RICKY MORTON (5'11", 227, 43, NL) The original rock 'n' roller made a statement in October by winning his 8th NWA tag team championship with his original partner Robert Gibson ... The legends would go on to lose the belts to Eli Drake and James Storm after a 115-day reign ... Took part in the NJPW U.S. shows.

400. NOAM DAR (5'9", 169, 12, 198) 2020 saw "The Scottish Supernova" return to singles greatness, defeating Stevie Boy for the ICW heavyweight title in February ... This was his first championship win in nearly four years ... Picked up a few notable singles wins in NXT U.K., defeating A-Kid and Josh Morrell.

401. REX LAWLESS (6'6", 264, 10, NL) Current NYWC heavyweight champion, winning the title in February ... Frequently tags with Bam Sullivan and Mike Verna, among others ... As "Rick Roland," teamed with Sloan Caprice (Verna) in 2019 CHIKARA Tag Team Gauntlet ... Appeared on Beyond Wrestling's *Uncharted Territory*, including a tag loss to Bear Country.

402. AUSTIN GUNN (6'1", 225, 3, NL) Son of former WWE superstar and current AEW producer Billy Gunn ... Reached finals of ROH Top Prospect Tournament in 2019, losing to Dak Draper ... Made AEW *Dark* debut on January 1, tagging with his father to defeat Shawn Spears and Preston Vance ... Their team, dubbed The Gunn Club, won again the next week.

403. ROBERT GIBSON (5'11", 224, 43, NL) Tag team partner of Ricky Morton in the legendary Rock 'n' Roll Express ... Returned to relevance on NWA *Power*, winning the NWA tag team belts in December ... Lost them in a three-way to Eli Drake and James Storm ... Rock 'n' Roll Express competed at NJPW's The New Beginning In USA, teaming with Hiroshi Tanahashi in a six-man tag victory.

404. BLAKE CHRISTIAN (5'11", 180, 3, NL) Nicknamed "All Heart" ... Had a breakout year in 2019, thanks to high-profile matches at IWA Mid South that caught attention of Game Changer Wrestling ... Over 70 matches in last calendar year, including wins over Tony Deppen, Alex Zayne ... Won FxD Young Guns Tournament 2019 ... Reached GCW Acid Cup finals in 2020.

405. ROHIT RAJU (5'8", 172, 12, 261) "Motivational" slaps from mentor Gama Singh haven't worked, as victories have been few and far between in Impact Wrestling ... Fared better in Border City Wrestling where he and Desi Hit Squad partner Raj Singh captured the Can-Am tag team titles ... As alter ego Hakim Zane, currently holds singles gold as AAW Heritage champion.

406. FALLAH BAHH (5'11", 425, 12, 402) Current RCW Champion and Impact Wrestling

PHOTO BY ROB BRAZIER



fixture ... Has gone from a solo competitor to part of a tag team with TJP ... Mixed it up with Reno Scum, XXXL, and The Deaners in 2020 ... Defeated The North in a non-title tag bout before he and TJP were defeated in a championship match.

407. JEFF CANNONBALL (5'11", 400, 12, NL) Journeyman hardcore brawler and death-match wrestler ... Current H2O tag team champion (with Mitch Vallen), ISW Falls Count Anywhere champion, and STAR Pro Heavyweight Champion ... Defeated wife, Terra Calaway, in her final match at Dropkick Depression ... Finishes opponents, appropriately, with The Cannonball.

408. CALVIN TANKMAN (6'2", 355, 4, NL) Former Division 1 football recruit ... Signed to Major League Wrestling in June 2020 ... Won Bizarro Lucha Luchaversal title, defeating Magmas ... Won six-man scramble at GCW Wrld On GCW Part 2 ... A rising star on the independent scene, and an incredible acquisition for MLW.

***409. CHAKARA** (5'6", 157, 4, NL) Current Kamikaze Pro Fighting Females champion ... Frequent intergender competitor in the U.K. for Rip-tide, RevPro, and PROGRESS ... Longtime member of the House of Couture stable in PROGRESS.

410. LOGAN EASTON LAROUX (5'11", 204, 10, NL) Highly detestable villain refers to himself as "The Champion Of The One-Percent" ... Holds singles wins over Breaux Keller, Jimmy Jacobs, and Penelope Ford ... Previously known as BLANK and Race Jaxon in CHIKARA, where he was a former tag team champ.

411. GREEN ANT (6'0", 161, 3, NL) Member of CHIKARA's The Colony (with Fire Ant, Thief Ant, and Worker Ant) ... Lost CHIKARA Young Lions Cup XVI Finals to Ricky South ... Toured Japan with Michinoku Pro in 2019 ... Known as "The Resilient Rookie" ... Trained at the Wrestle Factory ... Finishes opponents with a wicked swinging DDT.

412. JAMIE SENEGAL (5'9", 174, 5, 492) Frequent intergender competitor, nicknamed "The Punk Rock Kween" ... Former two-time ACW cruiserweight champion but could not regain the title after two losses to current champion, Dame Smith ... Came up short against Mercedes Martinez and Candy Lee at RISE and SHIMMER events in 2019.

413. DEVON MONROE (5'11", 155, 2, NL) Current Showtime Championship Wrestling Future Clash champion ... Mostly Minnesota-based wrestler who made a wider impression after seven-person elimination scramble at Prime Time Pro Wrestling's Butch vs. Gore in March ... Defeated Barackus, Matt Kenway, and Pretty Boy Smooth in Glory Pro's David Lee Memorial Tournament.

414. NICK IGGY (6'0", 195, 10, NL) One-half of tag team The Carnies with Kerry Awful ... Former two-time Bizarro Lucha Luchaverse champion and FEST tag team champion (with Awful) ... Lost Loser Leaves W.O.M.B.A.T. elimination match (as part of Team W.O.M.B.A.T.) to Team GCW ... Challenged WARHORSE for IWTW Championship, but lost ... On extended losing streak dating to October 2019.

415. BENJAMIN TULL (6'2", 229, 18, 330) Begun our evaluation period as the International Wrestling Syndicate champion and finished it as the Lutte 07 title holder ... Quebec native doesn't stray too far from home but doesn't need to in order to find success ... Usually attains it with his Phenomenal Driver (sit-out Michinoku Driver).

416. JIMMY JACOBS (5'7", 180, 21, 251) Current CWE Canadian Unified junior heavyweight champion, defeating Juventud Guerrera and Mentallo ... The former ROH standout has mostly been part of the Canadian and midwestern indie scenes in the past year, winning Loser Leaves IWA Mid-South (for one year) and Loser Leaves AAW matches in addition to holding his CWE title.

417. CABANA MAN DAN (5'4", 145, 18, NL) Reigning New South Champion and former one-time New South tag team champion (with Dump Sanders) ... Lost Southern Underground Pro (SUP) Bonestorm championship opportunity against AC Mack but also has wins over BLANK and Blake Christian ... A high-flying veteran who finishes opponents with The Surf's Up.

418. BILLY DIXON (5'11", 275, 5, NL) As one of the "Queermanders in Chief" (with Lolo McGrath) of Prime Time Pro Wrestling, organized PTPW's Butch vs. Gore event in March, working to elevate LGBTQ wrestlers ... Lost to PTPW champion O'Shay Edwards at said event ... Has also wrestled for F1ght Club Pro Wrestling and Pro Wrestling Magic ... Notable for his trash talk.

***419. GARY JAY** (5'10", 165, 17, NL) A fixture of the Midwestern indie scene, including St. Louis Anarchy, Freelance Wrestling, IWA Mid-South, and Journey Pro ... Wrestled to a draw against Aaron Williams for IWA Mid-South heavyweight title ... Won St. Louis Anarchy's Strong Style tournament in 2020 ... Won two matches in Beyond Wrestling's Discovery Gauntlet ... Known as the "Stiff Robo Ginger."

420. TRIPP CASSIDY (6'1", 207, 10, NL) Current and two-time Punk Pro Wrestling (PPW) heavyweight champion ... Frequently joins Nick Iggy and Kerry Awful as part of The Carnies ... Cassidy is piling up impressive wins on the indie scene in 2020 with dukes over Manders, Allie Kat, and Lee Moriarty ... Frequents both Bizarro Lucha and IWA Mid-South promotions.

PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD



421. BEER CITY

BRUISER (6'2", 323, 20, 336) Current heavyweight champion for Wisconsin's ICW ... One half of the tag team The Bouncers, with Brian Milonas ... Competed with Milonas on NWA *Powerrr*, falling to The Dawsons and Eli Drake and James Storm ... The Bouncers remain a Ring of Honor tag team staple but have yet to win the gold.

422. TONY NESE

(5'9", 197, 15, 45) Lost WWE cruiserweight championship after 77 days, dropping it in a triple threat match to Drew Gulak ... Mostly seen on 205 *Live*, with some appearances on *NXT* ... Notched wins over Oney Lorcan, Danny Burch, and Tyler Breeze ... Went 0-3 in NXT cruiserweight title tournament.

423. KERRY AWFUL (5'10", 244, 8, NL) Former FEST tag team champion with Nick Iggy (as The Carnies), won in a gauntlet match ... The Carnies also reached the CHIKARA King of Trios 2019 Tournament quarterfinals ... Awful, solo, fell to Camaro Jackson in the final of the PGP Ryan Buckley Memorial Tournament in March.

424. BRIAN MILONAS (6'4", 339, 19, 344) Joins Beer City Bruiser in The Bouncers, a tag team fixture of Ring of Honor ... Tagged with Beer City Bruiser on NWA *Powerrr* ... Held gold for a decade in Massachusetts' Chaotic Wrestling ... Took part in ROH's #1 Contender 20-Man Battle Royal in February.

425. TITUS O'NEIL (6'3", 268, 11, NL) A prominent philanthropist, O'Neil was a finalist for the 2020 Muhammad Ali Sports Humanitarian Award ... Spent part of one night as WWE 24/7 champion ... Mostly competed at house shows rather than on WWE TV, but did notch three wins in a row over Shelton Benjamin in 2019.

***426. GINO MEDINA** (6'2", 220, 5, 486) Current NWA Texas Stampede Wrestling Bull of the Woods champion and Vanguard Championship Wrestling heavyweight champ ... Frequent competitor for MLW has worked indies while the company is on COVID-19 hiatus ... Made GCW debut in January in a loss to Blake Christian ... Also competes as simply "Gino."



427. MIKE VERNA (6'0", 233, 7, NL) Reigning Fighting Spirit Wrestling (NYC) heavyweight champion reached semifinals of Beyond Wrestling's Beyond Championship Wrestling heavyweight title tournament ... Defeated Brian Pillman Jr. in February but also lost to VINCENT in March ... Notably crafted his first cheesecake in an ad for Philadelphia Cream Cheese.

428. ALEX COLON (5'7", 189, 12, NL) Colon is a fixture in the independent death-match scene, which led him to join GCW's tour of Japan in early 2020 ... He and Danny Havoc defeated Isami Kodaka and Toshiyuki Sakuda ... Colon also beat Eric Ryan at ICW No Holds Barred Vol. 2 ... Holds wins over Jake Something, Matthew Justice, and Jimmy Lloyd.

429. WATTS (6'6", 251, 12, NL) Dominates as Championship Wrestling From Hollywood Heritage heavyweight champion ... Was a regular at now-defunct Bar Wrestling ... Wrestles in tag teams as frequently as he does singles matches, with various partners ... Recently teamed with Dan Joseph to defeat Adrian Quest and Andy Brown.

430. ZANE DAWSON (6'3", 280, 17, NL) One-half of The Dawson Brothers, with Dave, is a four-time AML tag champ ... Defeated his brother in NWA TV title tourney qualifier ... Most recently on NWA *Powerrr*, the team fell to Caleb Konley and CW Anderson in a Tornado match, before that dropping a match to The Bouncers.

431. DAVE DAWSON (6'3", 293, 14, NL) Four-time AML (America's Most Liked) tag team champion, with Zane Dawson as The Dawson Brothers ... The brothers spent most of the year with AML and on NWA *Powerrr* ... Also part of NWA's TV title tournament qualifying gauntlet ... In NWA, scored wins over Outlaw Inc. and Eli Drake and Tim Storm.

432. PARROW (6'4", 293, 10, NL) Trained by The Dudley Boyz ... One-half of All Japan Pro Wrestling (AJPW) tag team The End (with Odinson) ... Competed in the 2019 AJPW Real World Tag League, with wins over Daisuke Sekimoto and The Bodyguard and Gianni Valletta and Takashi Yoshida ... Formerly held New South and FIP tag team gold with Odinson.

433. CODY HALL (6'8", 279, 8, NL) Son of Scott Hall wore Independent Pro Wrestling German and European Wrestling Promotion junior championships in 2019 ... Mostly wrestles in Europe and the U.K. but popped up in DDT (Dramatic Dream Team) in Japan, where he scored wins over Yuki Ueno and Yuki Iino.

434. JUSTIN SMOOTH (6'2", 229, 4, NL) Two-time Ohio Valley heavyweight champion and one-time OVW TV champ, most recently dropping the former to Maximus Khan in February and the latter to Shiloh

Jonze in a Gauntlet match ... Successfully defended OVW heavyweight title against Leonis Khan in a steel cage.

435. JOHNNY SWINGER (5'10", 216, 27, NL) Clown prince of Impact made his return in May 2019 ... Mostly on the losing end of things as of late, falling to Willie Mack (for Mack's X division championship) and TJP ... Has also teamed up with Glenn Gilberti (Disco Inferno), Buff Bagwell, and Chris Bey.

***436. KTB** (6'1", 273, 14, NL) Name is shorthand for "Kyle The Beast" ... Fixture of the East Coast indie scene, most prominently with Game Changer Wrestling ... Reached quarterfinal of GCW's Acid Cup 2, falling to Shane Mercer ... Just after evaluation period, resurrected "Kyle Smiley" persona at GCW's Backyard Wrestling 2.

437. MAXIMUS KHAN (6'3", 240, 2, NL) An Ohio Valley Wrestling (OVW) product, Maximus Khan is one half of King's Ransom with Leonis Khan ... One-time OVW heavyweight champion, dropping the title to Tony Gunn in March ... Also held OVW TV title and OVW Southern tag championship (with Leonis).

438. DAK DRAPER (6'5", 246, 8, NL) Trained at WWE Performance Center ... Has toured the indie scene but more recently made his presence known in Ring of Honor ... Picked up win over Danhausen and Jason Cade but came up short against TV champ Ryu Lee ... Also frequently works for MCW.

439. ABSOLUTE ANDY (6'3", 275, 17, NL) German-based wrestler and one-half of WXW tag team champions with Jay Skillet ... Has recorded five reigns with the title with various teammates ... His partner fails to rank this year after #SpeakingOut allegations led to his release ... A former Unified champion, Andy remains one of WXW's top stars.

440. JUN AKIYAMA (6'2", 243, 28, 299) At 50 years old, Akiyama is still active for All Japan Pro Wrestling and DDT, competing in tag team matches as well as singles bouts ... Scored wins this year over Dan Tamura and Makoto Oishi ... Three-time Triple Crown champion ... Embroiled in a feud with notorious DDT faction ALL OUT.



PHOTO BY EARL GARDNER/GCW

441. CHEESEBURGER (5'8", 130, 8, 420) Lost Feast Championship Wrestling title to Solo Darling at Beyond Wrestling's Americanrana 2019 ... Remains a fixture in Ring of Honor and challenged Villain Enterprises for six-man tag team gold (with Colt Cabana and Jeff Cobb) ... Recently joined Eli Isom and Nicole Savoy in a six-person victory at ROH Gateway To Honor.

442. COLE RADRICK (5'9", 185, 5, NL) Former Paradigm Pro Wrestling (PPW) and EMERGE Wrestling Outbreak champion ... Singles profile is on the rise thanks to recent appearances for Game Changer Wrestling (GCW) ... Also part of EMERGE tag team Hysteria (with Sage Philips) ... Dropped PPW title to Freddie Hudson in late July.

443. PETER AVALON (5'10", 165, 11, NL) One of All Elite Wrestling's Librarians (along with Leva Bates) ... Has not won a match in AEW since making his TV debut last October ... Teamed with Brandon Cutler in losses to The Jurassic Express, The Dark Order, and The Young Bucks ... Obnoxious, yet entertaining antagonist.

444. ZACK RYDER (6'2", 224, 16, 100) Released by WWE in April after 15-year run ... Spent most of last year in losing efforts in tag team matches with partner Curt Hawkins ... Hawkins and Ryder did get a win over Eric Young and Shelton Benjamin on *Main Event* in February ... Looks to return to wrestling sometime in 2020.

***445. SHELTON BENJAMIN** (6'2", 248, 20, 194) Mostly a fixture of WWE house shows, as well as WWE *Main Event* ... Benjamin has more recently been seen on *Raw*, losing two matches to Apollo Crews ... Scored wins over Shane Thorne, Akira Tozawa, and Curt Hawkins ... Won the 24/7 belt after evaluation period ended.

446. CONNOR MILLS (6'1", 180, 4, NL) Current IWL champ and the

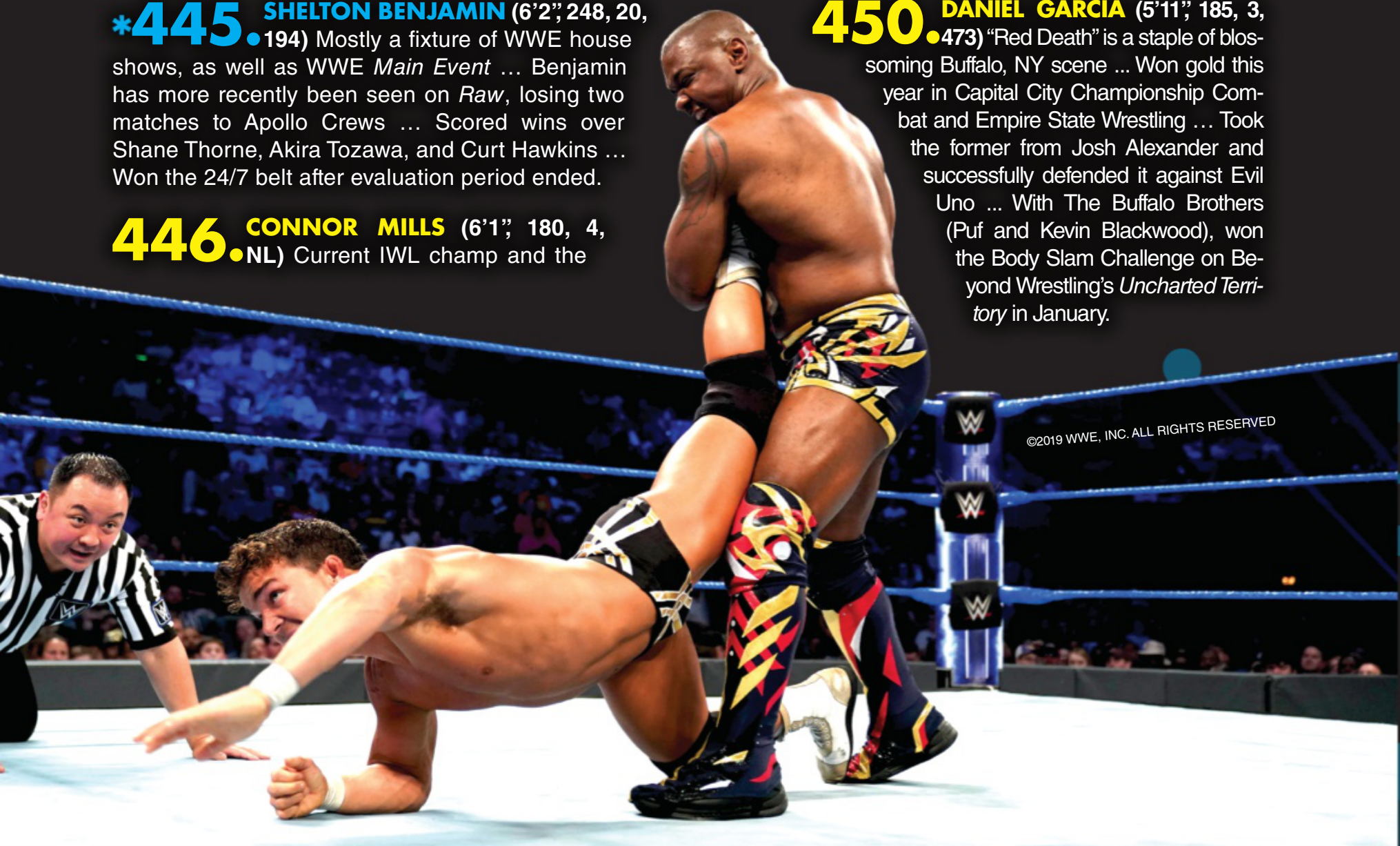
inaugural Pro Wrestling SOUL Men's Champion, defeating Scotty Davis in the tournament finals ... Appears for various U.K. promotions including ATTACK! and Battle Pro Wrestling ... Successfully defended IWL title against Mad Kurt in January ... Trained at PROGRESS Wrestling School.

447. SONNY DEFARGE (6'2", 216, 4, NL) Former two-time Premier Championship Wrestling tag champ with Cornelius Crummels ... Most active recently with CHIKARA, winning matches against Boomer Hatfield and Thief Ant ... Toured Japan with Michinoku Pro in 2019 ... Sound in-ring technician helps train the next generation at The Wrestle Factory.

448. TROY HOLLYWOOD (6'3", 205, 4, NL) IGNITE Wrestling champion defeated Aaron Epic in January ... Also a one-time American Combat Wrestling tag team champ with Hunter Law (team name: OAO) ... Mostly Florida-based wrestler, also works with Full Impact Pro and Punk Pro Wrestling, where he is currently Brass Ring champion ... Trained by Jay Lethal.

449. EM DEMOREST (5'10", 268, 3, NL) East Coast independent wrestler frequently seen in CHIKARA and GCW ... Member of CHIKARA stable The Crucible ... Competed with The Yard Legends in an eight-person match at GCW Backyard Wrestling 2 ... Reached quarterfinals of CHIKARA King Of Trios 2019 ... Once competed as the masked "Enzuigiri Evan."

450. DANIEL GARCIA (5'11", 185, 3, 473) "Red Death" is a staple of blossoming Buffalo, NY scene ... Won gold this year in Capital City Championship Combat and Empire State Wrestling ... Took the former from Josh Alexander and successfully defended it against Evil Uno ... With The Buffalo Brothers (Puf and Kevin Blackwood), won the Body Slam Challenge on Beyond Wrestling's *Uncharted Territory* in January.



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451. DAN BARRY (5'11", 195, 19, NL) Veteran tag specialist moonlights as a stand-up comic ... With Bill Carr, one-half of the oft-hilarious Team Tremendous ... Duo holds wins over The Butcher and The Blade and Bear Country ... Barry also teamed up with Session Moth Martina in Ireland's OTT.

452. FRED YEHI (5'9", 185, 8, 237) Perennially underrated indie grappler was slightly less active this year ... Earned a shot at AAW heavyweight title by winning a four-way dance ... Also beat ACH, Karrion Kross, and others ... Former FIP champ unsuccessfully challenged WARHORSE for the IWTW title on January 10.

453. JOEY ACE (5'10", 185, 11, 462) A year after his first "500" appearance, "The Champagne Papi" is still turning heads ... Retained the ECWA heavyweight title against Kekoa and KC Navarro before dropping it to Sam Shields ... Used COVID-19 downtime to study his craft and build his brand on Twitter.

454. GRADO (5'11", 235, 17, NL) Returns to the "500" this year after notable wins as a singles competitor ... Captured the Target Wrestling and Pro Wrestling Elite heavyweight championships ... Kept a pretty busy schedule until U.K. wrestling was put on hold ... Maintains a strong connection with fans.

***455. LAYNIE LUCK** (5'8", 134, 8, NL) Self-described "Party Unicorn" loves to have fun, but has no issue brutalizing opponents when need be ... Reigning women's champ for ZOWA and Zolo Pro also holds Freelance Underground Independent title ... Retained the latter in a six-way scramble that included AJ Gray and Blake Christian.

456. MV YOUNG (5'10", 209, 7, NL) Defeated Effy, Lee Moriarty, and Allie Kat during the evaluation period ... "Leader Of The Poly Cult" may be a little arrogant, but gets the job done in the ring ... Great potential if he focuses more on prepping for matches, less on (admittedly) well-lit promo videos.

457. ASHTON STARR (5'10", 162, 6, NL) Georgia native holds victories over AEW *Dark* staples Lee Johnson and Shawn Dean ... Challenged Trish Adora for the Pan-Afrikan Diaspora championship at PTPW's Butch vs. Gore ... Upset Corey Hollis for Southern Honor Wrestling title, but quickly lost it back in a steel cage match.

458. CASANOVA VALENTINE (6'2", 301, 6, NL) Has a reputation for wild hardcore matches, but can adapt reasonably well to other styles ... Former RISE champ faced Matt Tremont in a Barbed Wire Cage Match for Tremont's H2O promotion ... "The Hipster Heartthrob" continues to brave no-ring death-matches, even after several painful losses.

459. TONY GUNN

(5'11", 200, 9, 455) Reigning OVW heavyweight champ upended the massive Maximus Khan back in March ... Briefly held the company's TV title earlier in the evaluation period ... Lost to Trey at an OVW/Impact co-promotional show ... Could certainly do well in Impact Wrestling down the road.

460. RAUL MENDOZA

(5'9", 190, 14, NL) Recently entered a prominent role in NXT's Legado del Fantasma faction ... Had a decent record on 205 Live and at NXT live events ... Has struggled to win gold in recent years, but could make a serious play for NXT tag belts with Joaquin Wilde.



PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD

***461. PRESTON VANCE** (6'2", 240, 19, NL) Under The Dark Order's spell, Monster Factory grad was rechristened "10" ... Easily dealt with enhancement talent while struggling against mightier opponents, like Jon Moxley on the May 20 edition of *Dynamite* ... Prior to his AEW stint, competed in Southern indies as Cody Vance.

462. MVP (6'3", 259, 18, NL) Beat Chavo Guerrero Jr. for WCR heavyweight title at Impact Wrestling's Victory Road ... Returned to WWE, aligning himself with Bobby Lashley to feud with Apollo Crews ... Arguably one of the best talkers on the Raw roster ... Rumors of retirement were greatly exaggerated.

463. MARIUS AL-ANI (5'9", 198, 11, 462) WXW stalwart makes his first appearance in the "500" ... Scored wins over Chris Ridgeway and Daniel Makabe ... Won the 2019 Axel Dieter Memorial Cup, beating PJ Black in the final ... Former WXW Shotgun champ can win matches with a frog splash or ankle lock.

464. DICK TOGO (5'7", 198, 29, NL) Michinoku Pro veteran reached the finals of NOAH's Global Junior League 2020, where he fell to Daisuke Harada ... Won Tokyo Gurentai's Intercontinental tag title last September with partner MAZADA ... Shocked the world this July by joining Bullet Club, helping EVIL become NJPW double-champion.

465. RAMPAGE BROWN (6'1", 233, 22, NL) An exciting year for the former PROGRESS champ ... Massive Leeds native holds heavyweight titles for 3CW, BWR, and Wrestle Gate ... Also won RevPro's tag belts with The Great O'Kharn ... Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic kept Brown from defending those titles and, potentially, earning global acclaim.

466. ANTHONY BOWENS (5'10", 205, 7, NL) Won a four-way match for the WrestlePro Gold championship in Anchorage, Alaska ... Boasted an excellent win-loss record during the evaluation period, with singles victories over Tessa Blanchard and Alex Reynolds ... Fell to Richard Holliday in the semifinals of the Beyond Championship Wrestling title tournament.

467. AIR WOLF (5'10", 162, 6, NL) Minnesota native wows fans along with his tag partner Angel Dorado as The Flip Bros ... Wore Canadian Unified junior heavyweight belt for first three months of evaluation period ... Has held F1RST Wrestling's Wrestlepalooza title for over two years, though he seldom defends it.

468. QT MARSHALL (6'2", 301, 6, NL) ROH alum may not win the most matches, but he's a total workhorse ... With Allie in his corner, has found success in tag competition with partner Dustin Rhodes ... Former Monster Factory trainer now passes on wisdom to aspiring grapplers at his own Nightmare Factory.

469. MATT SYDAL (5'9", 165, 20, 192) In two decades, Sydal has made the "500" 13 times ... Beat Rabbi Swissa for the Israeli Pro Wrestling Association title last April and defended it successfully on three occasions ... Had a recent, memorable run with EVOLVE ... Rumored WWE return never panned out.

470. LOGAN CREED (6'8", 317, 8, NL) Former member of MLW's The Dynasty cuts an imposing physical presence ... A big draw on the Georgia independent scene, in more ways than one ... Successfully defended the SHW title against AC Mack in November, but lost it to Corey Hollis the next month.



PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW



PHOTO BY JESSICA LYNN

***471. ASHLEY VOX (5'3", 114, 6, NL)** When not competing on NWA *Powerrr* as part of their Women's division, "Poseidon's Siren" blazed an intergender trail across the country, lifting the Battle Club Pro tag team titles with Delmi Exo in a tournament on January 4 and having success against names like Santana, Ortiz, Colin Delaney, and Jake Atlas.

472. PJ BLACK (6'1", 213, 23, 140) Cape Town native beat Rob Van Dam last October to become the inaugural champ of Slamforce Africa ... Still wore the belt as our evaluation period ended ... Fell to Jay Lethal in the first round of Ring of Honor's #1 contendership tourney ... Recently began mentoring Future of Honor standout Brian Johnson.

473. LEYLA HIRSCH (5'1", 125, 3, NL) CZW Dojo grad sports a style that's part MMA, part old-school wrestling ... Earlier this year, Hirsch toured Japan, where she joined Stardom's Tokyo Cyber Squad ... Standout of Beyond Wrestling's *Uncharted Territory* holds wins over John Silver, DL Hurst ... Lost to LuFisto in the final of WXW's *Fatales* tournament.

474. DEVANTES (5'8", 224, 1, NL) Rookie powerhouse had a promising year derailed by a pandemic, along with CHIKARA closing shop ... Before that, played the muscle behind hated faction The Crucible ... Wasted little time moving on, as he competed on Paradigm Pro Wrestling's first post-shutdown event ... Intimidates foes with broad frame and brutal powerslam.

er humbly calling herself "just one of the guys" or, less humbly, "The Galaxy DelmiGod," there's no denying the impact the SHIMMER tag team champion is making ... Alongside her sister Ashley Vox, scored victories over many male teams on the independent scene, including a big win over Santana and Ortiz on a Battle Club Pro event.

478. SAKI AKAI (5'9", 117, 7, NL) 17-time DDT Ironman Heavymetalweight champion recently teamed with her Eruption stablemates to win the KO-D six-man tag title from The Strong Hearts ... Competed in seven-match trial series that concluded with a loss to Meiko Satomura ... Originally an actress and model, Akai has worked hard to step up her in-ring game.

479. BRENDAN VINK (5'9", 165, 20, 192) Former Elliot Sexton reunited with fellow TMDK alum Shane Thorne on *Raw* ... Defeated Colby Corino at EVOLVE 141, beginning a winning streak for the company that included victories over AR Fox and JD Drake ... Prior to his *Raw* debut, Australia native was a staple of NXT live events.

480. BOOMER HATFIELD (5'5", 150, 2, NL) Baseball-masked Wrestle Factory grad still won rights to persona after beating his (kayfabe) father, Dasher Hatfield, in a mask versus mask bout last spring ... This year, he scored singles wins over KTB, Matt Markowski, and others ... Has formed a scrappy underdog tag team with "cousin" Molly McCoy.

475. AKIRA TOZAWA (5'7", 156, 15, 102)

Massive drop this year for the former cruiserweight champ, from #102 to barely making the list ... His year was highlighted by two brief reigns with the 24/7 title, along with the introduction of his ninja entourage ... Reduced role doesn't reflect his talent, as he oozes charisma and technical ability.

476. YUJI NAGATA (6', 238, 28, 219)

Now in his 50s, ex-NEVER openweight champ has become a tag specialist ... Paired with Manabu Nakanishi in 2019 World Tag League tournament ... They teamed up again in a dark match at *Wrestle Kingdom*, as well as in Nakanishi's retirement match ... Lost to Lance Archer in a singles match in Nashville.

477. DELMI EXO (5' 7", 155, 5, NL)

481. ISAIAH BRONER (6', 260, 3, NL) Had held the XICW Proving Ground title for more than two years at press time ... Also held the promotion's Warrior Rampage title, which he defended against Hernandez last August ... Had previously beaten Hernandez for the strap ... Native Detroiter puts his opponents away with the spear.

482. MARKO ESTRADA (5'10", 178, 18, 248) New Brunswick-born wrestler enjoyed reigns with the top titles of Quebec's Federation Canadienne de Lutte and North Shore Pro Wrestling, still wearing the latter at press time ... Beat Mike Bailey in the final of last spring's NSPW Standing 8 tournament, which he'd previously won in 2014 and 2017.

483. TYLER BREEZE (6'1", 212, 13, 232) Tag team momentum came to a screeching halt when his injured partner, Fandango, was sidelined for six months ... Breeze bided his time on *205 Live* to mixed success ... Hasn't won gold since the salad days of Florida Championship Wrestling, where he was a tag champ with Leakee (Roman Reigns).

***484. ISAIAS VELAZQUEZ** (5'8", 224, 1, NL) Didn't capture any major titles this year, but managed to stay viable on the Midwest indie circuit ... Scored singles wins over Danhausen, Arik Cannon,

and Shotzi Blackheart ... Former two-time Freelance champ most recently dropped the belt to current girlfriend Kylie Rae at last February's "Sleepless in Chicago" event.

485. AVA EVERETT (5'8", 130, 2, NL) Is to the 1990s what her beau Anthony Greene is to the '80s ... The decidedly retro couple found tag success in CZW ... Also comprises one-half of The Platinum Hunnies with Angel Sinclair ... That pairing won Empower Wrestling's tag title ... "The Ava-Taker" has an impressive chokeslam.

486. STEPHEN WOLF (5'10", 182, 5, NL) Native American wrestler based out of the Midwest enjoyed a breakout year ... The highlight was a fatal four-way victory against Harlem Bravado, Curt Stallion, and Sean Maluta ... That bout aired on WWE TV as part of EVOLVE's 10 year anniversary special ... His shooting star press is a thing of beauty.

487. LEE JOHNSON (5'11", 185, 3, NL) Now a regular on cable TV, "Big Shotty" cut his teeth in IWA Mid-South and Absolute Intense Wrestling ... On April 7, lost to his trainer QT Marshall in his AEW *Dark* debut ... Prior to training at Marshall's Nightmare Factory, Johnson studied under AR Fox at his WWA4 School.

488. BRIAN JOHNSON (6', 202, 13, NL) Future of Honor overachiever finally arrived on the ROH main roster ... Has found a somewhat dependable partner in PJ Black ... Had a series of show-downs with Juventud Guerrera during a 2019 tour of the Canadian Prairies ... Has worn tag gold in ECWA, D2W, and New Jersey's Old Time Wrestling.

489. KILLIAN McMURPHY (5'11", 207, 3, NL) "The Shamrock Shooter" makes his first "500" list following appearances for Beyond Wrestling and Maryland Championship Wrestling ... Competed in the 2019 King of New York tournament, where he lost to Vinny Pacifico in round one ... One-half of the first openly gay couple in wrestling history with Sonny Kiss.

490. DAN CHAMPION (6'6", 224, 15, NL) A veteran of the Mid-Atlantic indie scene, "Big Dan" had a big year ... Competed in CHIKARA, GCW, and Beyond ... Squared off against childhood friend Orange Cassidy in the hollowed-out remains of a Foot Locker last August ... Yes, really ... Muscular grappler touts the benefits of a plant-based diet.



PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD

491. MOLLY McCOY (5'3", 145, 2, NL) Emerged from CHIKARA's Wrestle Factory the niece of champion Dasher Hatfield ... Teamed with Dasher and "cousin" Boomer at King of Trios as "The Hatfields and McCoy" ... Won a six-person scramble at LVAC's July 2019 "Let's Hang Out" event ... "The Grittiest Girl In The Game" has a mean Bodycheck clothesline.

492. ALAN ANGELS (5'8", 169, 4, 140) Now best known as The Dark Order's "Five" ... Wore the Southern Honor Wrestling title at the beginning of the evaluation period, but lost it quickly to AC Mack ... Though still a long way from AEW superstardom, he's fared much better alongside his Dark Order stablemates than he did without them.

493. DANSHOKU DINO (5'10", 231, 18, NL) Cuddly Dramatic Dream Team veteran makes his first "500" appearance since 2007 ... As DDT has gained wider exposure outside Japan, fans across the globe have embraced Dino's comedic shtick ... A 32-time holder of the Ironman Heavymetalweight title, Hiroshima native also captured the DDT 10-man tag title last fall.

494. MOONSHINE MANTELL (6'1", 240, 7, NL) Reigning DCW Texas champ beat Andy Dalton for the title back in November 2018 ... Last October, he battled IWGP U.S. champion Lance Hoyt (Archer) to a no-contest in a title vs. title match ... Lost to Logan Creed on a January episode of MLW *Fusion* ... Signature Alabama Slam is called "100 Proof."

495. RICKY SOUTH (6'2", 231, 3, NL) Frankie Wrestling Australia heavyweight champ was a virtual unknown in the U.S. before entering CHIKARA's annual Young Lions Cup tournament in 2019 ... After falling in the semifinal last year, he won this year's tourney ... Defeated Max The Impaler (semifinal) and Green Ant (final) en route to the prize.

496. MIKEY NICHOLLS (6'1", 227, 19, 348) Former tag partner of Shane Thorne has found a new home in New Japan Pro-Wrestling ... Entered the 2019 New Japan Cup, but fell to eventual winner Kazuchika Okada in round two ... Teamed with Jeff Cobb in 2019 World Tag League ... Reigning EPW heavyweight champ at press time.

497. SHANE THORNE (6'2", 225, 17, 189) A former two-time GHC tag cham-

pion in Pro Wrestling NOAH, founding member of "The Mighty" has struggled to find footing ... Frequently on the losing end of matches on *Main Event* ... Recent reunion with former stablemate Brendan Vink could lead to better things ... Trained with Naomichi Marufuji in Japan.

498. JOHN CAMPBELL (6'5", 240, 13, NL) This is the Michigan powerhouse's third appearance in the "500," having ranked previously in 2015 and 2016 ... "The Creature Feature" had a memorable rivalry with Chuck Hammer with several no-holds-barred bouts ... Captured the MWO tag title with partner Skullz ... Outside the ring, married his longtime girlfriend last fall.

499. MYSTERIOUS Q (6'3", 235, 12, NL) New Orleans native relocated to Houston after Hurricane Katrina ... Today, ranks among Texas's most upwardly mobile indie grapplers ... Successfully defended New Texas Pro championship against Chris Bey in December ... Also holds the Reality of Wrestling TV title ... Masked wrestler levels foes with his Rack Bomb and Q-Cutter.

***500. DAN THE DAD** (6'1", 200, 6, NL) Danny Adams' popular new persona is marked by khaki shorts, oversized glasses, other suburban dadisms ... Sometimes wields his belt as a weapon ... Despite penchant for silliness, managed a nice reign with the Zero Gravity title in Ontario's A1 Wrestling ... Beat Allie Kat in round one of BLP's Turbo Graps 16 tourney.



PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD


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439	Absolute Andy	466	Anthony Bowens	370	D-Rogue	485	Ava Everett	136	Mark Haskins
453	Joey Ace	305	Kotto Brazil	129	Daga	131	EVIL	357	Dasher Hatfield
208	ACH	483	Tyler Breeze	159	Killian Dain	232	Evil Uno	480	Boomer Hatfield
173	Trish Adora	175	Josh Briggs	500	Dan the Dad	477	Delmi Exo	390	Joe Hendry
196	Aero Star	220	Jay Briscoe	158	Danhausen	20	Jacob Fatu	290	Anthony Henry
238	Fabian Aichner	225	Mark Briscoe	112	Christopher Daniels	52	Fenix	206	Hernandez
478	Saki Akai	481	Isaiah Broner	400	Noam Dar	233	David Finlay	345	Chris Hero
248	Akam	257	Chris Brookes	372	DARK Sheik	122	Bobby Fish	149	El Hijo de LA Park
440	Jun Akiyama	465	Rampage Brown	318	Solo Darling	297	Mat Fitchett	300	El Hijo del Vikingo
463	Marcus AI-Ani	32	Daniel Bryan	353	Jon Davis	194	Flamita	473	Leyla Hirsch
15	Nick Aldis	294	Danny Burch	375	Mark Davis	378	Kyle Fletcher	263	Will Hobbs
195	Josh Alexander	141	BUSHI	157	Angelo Dawkins	154	Montez Ford	336	Ridge Holland
285	Cedric Alexander	315	The Butcher	430	Zane Dawson	189	AR Fox	198	Richard Holliday
251	Mustafa Ali	115	Colt Cabana	431	Dave Dawson	376	Isaiah Frazier	448	Troy Hollywood
55	Darby Allin	417	Cabana Man Dan	319	Shawn Dean	22	Maxwell Jacob Friedman	219	Homicide
143	Mr. Anderson	322	Jason Cade	284	Cody Deaner	271	Madman Fulton	79	Rey Horus
204	Karl Anderson	51	Brian Cage	447	Sonny Defarge	199	Joe Gacy	359	Travis Huckabee
27	Andrade	57	Sami Callihan	449	EM Demorest	67	Nick Gage	17	Kota Ibushi
256	Mark Andrews	498	John Campbell	124	Eddie Dennis	203	Luke Gallows	414	Nick Iggy
255	Matt Angel	393	Arik Cannon	266	Tony Deppen	450	Daniel Garcia	288	Shigehiro Irie
316	Angelico	407	Jeff Cannonball	474	Devantes	46	Johnny Gargano	283	Royce Isaacs
492	Alan Angels	253	Caristico	117	Jordan Devlin	331	Dominic Garrini	371	Kaito Ishida
59	Lance Archer	91	Humberto Carrillo	214	Dez	109	Angel Garza	71	Tomohiro Ishii
384	Shotaro Ashino	337	Darius Carter	278	Zicky Dice	269	Gedo	135	Shuji Ishikawa
169	Jake Atlas	346	Christian Casanova	193	Chris Dickinson	245	Zack Gibson	340	Taiji Ishimori
94	Ace Austin	84	Orange Cassidy	104	Dominik Dijakovic	403	Robert Gibson	181	Ivar
398	Avalanche	420	Tripp Cassidy	493	Danshoku Dino	304	Golden Magic	160	Faye Jackson
443	Peter Avalon	387	Cassius	418	Billy Dixon	163	Flip Gordon	73	Matt Jackson
423	Kerry Awful	289	Dalton Castle	66	Naruki Doi	107	Hirooki Goto	75	Nick Jackson
343	Bad Luck Fale	127	Cesaro	360	Lince Dorado	454	Grado	416	Jimmy Jacobs
406	Fallah Bahh	412	Chakara	188	Drago	63	AJ Gray	277	Jado
295	Mike Bailey	490	Dan Champion	125	Ilja Dragunov	228	Stu Grayson	138	Joey Janela
35	Finn Balor	441	Cheeseburger	120	Eli Drake	411	Green Ant	419	Gary Jay
34	Bandido	404	Blake Christian	247	James Drake	209	Anthony Greene	3	Chris Jericho
242	El Barbaro Cavernario	30	Tommaso Ciampa	265	JD Drake	49	Jonathan Gresham	487	Lee Johnson
451	Dan Barry	239	CIMA	438	Dak Draper	134	Cameron Grimes	488	Brian Johnson
240	Marcel Barthel	382	RJ City	356	Tommy Dreamer	50	Ultimo Guerrero	93	Jungle Boy
145	Tyler Bate	70	Jeff Cobb	81	Pete Dunne	308	Gran Guerrero	325	Matthew Justice
298	Bateman	264	Mark Coffey	344	Kobe Durst	61	Sammy Guevara	187	Isiah Kassidy
421	The Beer City Bruiser	396	Atticus Cogar	342	Tyson Dux	60	Drew Gulak	110	Allie Kat
259	Ben-K	2	Adam Cole	132	Eddie Edwards	402	Austin Gunn	113	Frankie Kazarian
445	Shelton Benjamin	361	Orlando Colon	351	O'Shay Edwards	459	Tony Gunn	323	Kekoa
347	Kevin Bennett	428	Alex Colon	77	Effy	178	Bobby Gunns	366	Breaux Keller
368	La Bestia del Ring	41	Baron Corbin	252	Eita	176	Jake Hager	58	KENTA
202	Chris Bey	311	Colby Corino	155	Elias	433	Cody Hall	437	Maximus Khan
101	Big E	276	Cousin Jake	102	Tetsuya Endo	98	Alexander Hammerstone	197	Brody King
23	Aleister Black	470	Logan Creed	180	Erik	211	HARASHIMA	241	Kenny King
472	PJ Black	82	Apollo Crews	369	Santos Escobar	246	Matt Hardy	217	Eddie Kingston
349	Black Taurus	234	Jake Crist	482	Marko Estrada	165	Dax Harwood	9	Kofi Kingston
313	The Blade	303	Matt Cross	309	Euforia			164	Sonny Kiss
83	Tessa Blanchard	267	Suge D	314	Jack Evans			36	Kaito Kiyomiya

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213	Isami Kodaka	362	Gran Metalik	377	PB Smooth	47	Go Shiozaki	171	Trey
330	Caleb Konley	446	Connor Mills	31	PCO	229	SHO	326	Spike Trivet
96	Karrion Kross	424	Brian Milonas	74	Pentagon Jr.	123	Shorty G	415	Benjamin Tull
436	KTB	274	Mistico	170	El Phantasmo	306	John Silver	183	Jey Uso
350	Kevin Ku	24	Kento Miyahara	140	Brian Pillman Jr.	97	Scorpio Sky	184	Jimmy Uso
167	Kushida	216	Yuko Miyamoto	462	Montel Vontavious Porter	89	Davey Boy Smith Jr.	458	Casanova Valentine
78	Kylie Rae	87	The Miz	108	Damian Priest	434	Justin Smooth	192	Rob Van Dam
381	Tre' LaMar	286	Masaaki Mochizuki	185	Marq Quen	334	El Soberano Jr.	461	Preston Vance
299	Laredo Kid	391	Dan Moloney	243	R-Truth	495	Ricky South	296	Davey Vega
410	Logan Easton Laroux	413	Devon Monroe	442	Cole Radrick	144	Shawn Spears	484	Isaias Velazquez
44	Bobby Lashley	148	Moose	405	Rohit Raju	92	Ricky Starks	90	Velveteen Dream
282	Thom Latimer	385	Lee Moriarty	281	Mojo Rawley	457	Ashton Starr	427	Mike Verna
401	Rex Lawless	100	John Morrison	339	Ruby Raze	279	Erick Stevens	237	VINCENT
111	Tom Lawlor	399	Ricky Morton	103	Myron Reed	365	Still Life with Apricots and Pears	479	Brendan Vink
133	Jake Lee	373	Riddick Moss	236	Bronson Reed	64	James Storm	244	Volador Jr.
11	Keith Lee	1	Jon Moxley	14	Roman Reigns	29	Roderick Strong	471	Ashley Vox
76	Ryu Lee	389	Trevor Murdoch	328	Timmy Lou Retton	19	Braun Strowman	218	Dr. Wagner Jr.
12	Brock Lesnar	114	Murphy	312	Alex Reynolds	182	Marko Stunt	25	WALTER
86	Jay Lethal	43	Rey Mysterio	249	Rezar	10	AJ Styles	397	Wardlow
379	El Lindaman	499	Mysterious Q	250	Rhino	62	Takashi Sugiura	106	Warhorse
293	Jimmy Lloyd	302	Myzteziz Jr.	7	Cody Rhodes	42	Suwama	172	Mance Warner
151	Tanga Loa	476	Yuji Nagata	137	Dustin Rhodes	153	Minoru Suzuki	429	Watts
363	Darius Lockhart	5	Tetsuya Naito	56	Ricochet	230	Rich Swann	258	Flash Morgan Webster
291	Oney Lorcan	174	Katsuhiko Nakajima	80	Matt Riddle	435	Johnny Swinger	215	Wentz
338	Low Ki	26	Shinsuke Nakamura	374	Sal Rinauro	469	Matt Sydal	166	Cash Wheeler
105	Luchasaurus	348	KC Navarro	201	Juice Robinson	226	T-Hawk	28	Jay White
455	Laynie Luck	422	Tony Nese	310	Paul Robinson	273	Ryusuke Taguchi	329	White Mike
205	Dexter Lumis	496	Mikey Nicholls	8	Seth Rollins	119	Taichi	307	Tracy Williams
68	Willie Mack	139	Niebla Roja	212	Robert Roode	53	Shingo Takagi	467	Air Wolf
392	AC Mack	324	Willow Nightingale	179	Rowan	40	Hiromu Takahashi	486	Stephen Wolf
367	Jinder Mahal	72	Cara Noir	380	Arturo Ruas	130	Konosuke Takeshita	262	Wolfgang
341	Daniel Makabe	395	Chuck O'Neil	272	Leon Ruff	38	Hiroshi Tanahashi	168	Xavier Woods
287	Togi Makabe	425	Titus O'Neil	18	Rush	118	Masato Tanaka	16	Bray Wyatt
355	Matt Makowski	121	Kyle O'Reilly	99	Lio Rush	408	Calvin Tankman	260	Toru Yano
320	Chuck Mambo	268	TK O'Ryan	444	Zack Ryder	352	TARIK	452	Fred Yehi
388	Man Like Dereiss	383	The OJMO	162	Kip Sabian	45	Matt Taven	231	YOH
354	1 Called Manders	142	Yuji Okabayashi	54	Zack Sabre, Jr.	223	Chuck Taylor	200	Susumu Yokosuka
333	Mansoor	6	Kazuchika Okada	207	Samoa Joe	65	Shane Taylor	301	Yoshitatsu
494	Moonshine Mantell	210	Jordan Oliver	85	SANADA	364	El Terrible	456	MV Young
292	MAO	13	Kenny Omega	335	Pinkie Sanchez	116	Timothy Thatcher	332	Silas Young
468	QT Marshall	128	Ortiz	126	Santana	152	Austin Theory	386	Wheeler Yuta
190	Naomichi Marufuji	48	Randy Orton	327	Thomas Santell	497	Shane Thorne	156	Sami Zayn
224	Drake Maverick	21	Will Ospreay	161	Daisuke Sasaki	317	Titan	227	Alex Zayne
254	Max The Impaler	69	Otis	191	Isaiah Scott	261	Rhett Titus	270	Zeus
491	Molly McCoy	37	Kevin Owens	88	Marty Scurll	275	TJP	95	Dolph Ziggler
4	Drew McIntyre	39	PAC	147	Daisuke Sekimoto	464	Dick Togo		
489	Killian McMurphy	33	Adam Page	409	Jamie Senegal	150	Tama Tonga		
426	Gino Medina	186	Ethan Page	177	Trent Seven	475	Akira Tozawa		
460	Raul Mendoza	235	Rickey Shane Page	280	Ken Shamrock	358	Matt Tremont		
321	Shane Mercer	146	LA Park	221	Alex Shelley	222	Trent		
394	El Mesias	432	Parrow						

AL CASTLE'S TAKE



Former Impact champ **Tessa Blanchard** influenced our decision to include women in this year's "500." Here, she connects with a tope suicida on **Dave Crist**, who was released by Impact and Rockstar Pro following #SpeakingOut allegations. Crist does not appear on this year's list.

PHOTO BY BASIL MAHMUD/
IMPACT WRESTLING

THE WORLD IS IN FLUX ... SO, TOO, IS THE "500"

A PANDEMIC THAT shut down wrestling companies around the globe for more than a third of the evaluation period. A national reckoning on institutional racism that spurred us to more closely look at the names (and skin tones) of the wrestlers on our list. And a new milestone in female empowerment that made us consider the inclusion of women—and the exclusion of some men—in the *PWI* "500."

Never have world events, politics, and social revolutions shaped the list as they have in this, its 30th edition. While part of me certainly misses the days when all we had to consider was the tidy criteria we developed over the last three decades, I certainly appreciate why the formation of this year's list was, by necessity, complicated. It's because the world is, too.

Let's start with the COVID-19 outbreak. Here's a bit of *PWI* "500" trivia: I was the one who came up with the rule (adopted years ago) that, to be ranked, a wrestler must have competed in 20 matches during the evaluation period, or at least one match in seven separate months. The idea was to have a hard-and-fast policy on what constitutes wrestler "inactivity."

As well-intended as it was, the rule didn't account for the possibility that one day, putting on wrestling matches would not only be difficult, but potentially a threat to public health. It seemed unfair to penalize wrestlers who, like many people, stayed home for the last four months of the evaluation period, either out of their own choosing or because of the sound judgment of their respective employers. We had to account for that.

Then there's the issue of race. The unfortunate reality is that in the 30-year history of the *PWI* "500," Black wres-

tlers have only broken into the top 10 on 12 occasions—a meager rate of 4 percent. It's easy for us to say that the matter is out of our hands, as the *PWI* staff is largely beholden to who wrestling promoters decide to push as their top stars. But that would be passing the buck.

Even while working within our set criteria for the "500," we do give weight to a wrestler's influence on the sport—like the influence Kofi Kingston had by being the only Black wrestler to hold a major world championship during the evaluation period. We had to account for that.

And what about the role of women in wrestling? Once a freak show attraction, intergender matches have become more commonplace, as evidenced by Tessa Blanchard winning the Impact heavyweight title. While the female counterpart to this list, the forthcoming Women's 100, still exists, that doesn't mean the "500" should necessarily be exclusive to men. We had to account for that.

Perhaps most troubling was the question of what to do about the multitude of wrestlers accused of sexual misconduct in the #SpeakingOut movement. While appreciating the American justice system's presumption of innocence, some of the more credible accusations are deeply troubling. Obviously, we were reluctant to heap praise on potential sexual predators, regardless of their wrestling accomplishments.

Without making judgements of guilt (or innocence), we chose to consider each accused wrestler on a case-by-case basis . . . eliminating those left in limbo by terminations or suspensions. We realize that, inevitably, some people will be upset with our decisions. We had to account for that.

Accountability is an important thing these days.

HARRY BURKETT'S TAKE

Last year, **Robert Roode** out-ranked many of the top wrestlers from other promotions, simply because he appeared on WWE TV. This year, with the rise of AEW and the impact of COVID-19, being under contract with WWE did him few favors.

AS WWE WANES, OTHERS COME TO THE FORE

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BACK IN JUNE, I attended my first PWI “500” meeting in several years. I usually have strong feelings about the top three, but quite frankly, whether we rank Dominik Dijakovic or Luchasaurus at 104 doesn’t really matter to me.

Even this year, with Stu Saks retired and Dan Murphy gone to pursue new endeavors, I was confident our new Editor-in-Chief, Kevin McElvaney, and our committee of sharp, plugged-in writers were absolutely capable of ranking the sport’s superstars from 1 to 500. They could tell me all about Effy, Pro Wrestling NOAH, and the nuances of the AAA-CMLL rivalry, while I still spend my columns wondering why Ric Flair wore his kneepads below his knees.

Yet, with AEW on TNT and the COVID-19 pandemic, this was an evaluation period like none other. I wondered how the “500” would reflect these seismic events. Knowing the rationale behind our rankings would be very important as I wrote my usual assignment of bios—and whenever I had to field questions from readers and pundits beyond our magazine.

I attended the first of two “500” meetings . . . via Zoom of course. And, boy, this meeting had a different vibe. When I was more involved in these meetings 10, 15, and 20 years ago, so many of the rankings were based on gut instinct, where the promoter had positioned a given talent in the company, and whether the wrestler was signed with WWE (or TNA or WCW or ECW).

This meeting felt like we were ranking an actual sport. McElvaney would call a timeout so he could pull up a wrestler’s win-loss record on Cagematch.net. Each wrestler was being so carefully vetted and considered. It was terrific.

One big change in our industry is that many wrestlers can make their way in the business without being at the mercy of individual bookers. If Madman Fulton feels sti-

fled in Impact Wrestling, he has options such as the NWA, Ring of Honor, and maybe even AEW. Wrestlers can be masters of their own destinies. Cody Rhodes proved that beyond a doubt.

To me, the most glaring difference between this year’s “500” and the 2019 “500” is that WWE no longer dominates the top 100. Last year, 50 out of the top 100 spots were occupied by WWE talent. In 2020, that number is down to 34.

Last year, my “Take” addressed why WWE dominated the top 100, and why that was appropriate. I explained why Robert Roode, who had a lackluster year in WWE, was ranked ahead of a red-hot global attraction, Marty Scurll. Simply put, the power of the WWE brand, the visibility of WWE superstars, and the frequency of the WWE touring schedule were enough to put someone like Roode over someone like Scurll.

Forget everything I said last year. With WWE touring ended by COVID, AEW establishing itself as WWE’s toughest rival since WCW, and international and independent promotions flourishing on the internet, the momentum of the industry reached a tipping point. WWE is still number one, but the combined alternatives are a much greater force than WWE. And I would even count NXT as an internal alternative.

WWE reminds me of an old Hollywood studio, trying to hang on to its roster of contract players to make formulaic movies and satisfy investors. Meanwhile, there’s a plethora of independent filmmakers out there making original movies to greater critical acclaim.

And, while there were several factors at work this year, it’s interesting to note Marty Scurll is ranked 88 while Robert Roode is number 212.

I’m already looking forward to next year’s “500” meeting.

RIGHTEOUS REG'S TAKE

Rapper and YouTube personality Righteous Reg has vocally advocated for better representation in wrestling . . . including in these pages. He feels wrestlers like **Will Hobbs** were unfairly left off last year's "500." Reg's BW250 list had an impact on this year's "500" and helped shine a light on overlooked Black wrestlers.

PHOTO BY LEE SOUTH/AEW

BETTER REPRESENTATION, BUT STILL ROOM TO GROW

LAST YEAR, AFTER the PWI "500" dropped, I created my own list of the world's best wrestlers, called the Black Wrecellence 250. Having researched the representation in 2019's "500," I found it to be pretty lackluster: Only six percent of the wrestlers listed were Black. One thing led to another, and the BW250 was born. A lot came from that list, but, most importantly, it had an influence on this year's PWI "500." And that is the reason I am here writing this.

Considering the "500" criteria, it's not surprising this year's #1 pick is Jon Moxley. With his promos, polarizing podcast interviews, and high-profile matches in AEW and New Japan, Moxley really shook up the landscape of pro wrestling ... and legitimized AEW.

In its first full year, AEW spent a lot of airtime showcasing tag team wrestling. The Young Bucks, Lucha Bros., Best Friends, The Jurassic Express, and Private Party all had tremendous matches on *Dynamite* and on pay-per-view. AEW dedicated time to newer talent, with the aforementioned Private Party putting on classic after classic ... particularly their match with The Young Bucks in the tag title tournament. Even more teams got a chance to shine on AEW's YouTube show, *Dark*. You'll see many of them scattered throughout the list.

NXT was thrown into direct competition with AEW, but has not for one second backed down from the challenge. Adam Cole has put on so many classic matches we have lost count at this point, and that is the reason why he is the #2 pro wrestler in the world this year. Show for show, NXT might be the best wrestling in the world, with guys like Keith Lee, Roderick Strong, Pete Dunne, and Johnny Gargano doing amazing things. It's no question as to why they have so many prominent spots on the list this year.

WWE and AEW occupy four of the top five slots in the "500." In the shadows of those companies sits New Japan. When it comes to match quality, NJPW operates at the highest level. With talent like Tetsuya Naito,

Kazuchika Okada, Will Ospreay, Shingo Takagi, and Hiroshi Tanahashi, you can really see why it's remained one of the top promotions in the world.

Ring of Honor had a tough year due to the pandemic. When they did run shows, they made a point to shine the light on a new regime. Many of the top spots in ROH are occupied by Mexican luchadores—wrestlers from AAA and CMLL like Rush, Dragon Lee, Rey Horus, and Bandido, pulling off moves you wouldn't believe. Black wrestlers including Jonathan Gresham, Kenny King, Shane Taylor, and Jay Lethal all had tremendous years, filling up ROH cards and quietly putting forth great matches. Ring of Honor always has been—and still is—slept on. I hope that changes.

Surrounded by a number of controversies, Impact Wrestling produced a high-quality show on Tuesday nights, with wrestlers like Willie Mack, Rich Swann, Trey Miguel, Ethan Page, and Josh Alexander tearing it up every single time. To me, Chris Bey is one of the best young talents in the world. Impact also has one of the best women's divisions out there. This company shouldn't go unnoticed.

A year after I created the Black Wrecellence 250, I do wonder again if the "500" has enough representation. This year, about 75 of the 500 listed are Black wrestlers. I am excited for all those I champion on a daily basis: AJ Gray (#63), Will Hobbs (#263), Chris Bey (#202), and, even more exciting, women like Willow Nightingale (#324) and Faye Jackson (#160). But I feel like there are many others who should've been included. Compiling my list—and knowing the process behind the "500"—I sympathize with everything that goes into it. It's extremely difficult to get it right, and including some women this year added even more pressure.

Time will tell if this all produces the desired results. Starting with this year's PWI "500" list, and the updated Black Wrecellence 500, the change has begun. I am just extremely grateful to be a part of the process.



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THE WAY IT WAS

BY BRIAN SOLOMON

IT'S BECOME A common refrain. Ask any wrestler who broke into the game within the past 20 years, and, more often than not, they will tell you that the competitor who most influenced them and inspired them to step into the ring is Shawn Michaels. That's because of the standard of excellence he set in the ring, as an unparalleled performer who could bump and sell like nobody's business, who always made his opponents look great, and whose arsenal was filled with exciting, crisply executed maneuvers. If you go back a little earlier, a response you're often likely to get is Ric Flair, for much the same reasons. And yet, if you were to ask Flair himself that same question—or the majority of wrestlers of his generation—the name you would most likely hear is one we don't hear very often these days, but should: Ray “The Crippler” Stevens.

Considered by many longtime fans and historians to be the greatest all-around performer of the 1960s (and possibly of all time), Stevens was a gritty athlete and dazzling showman at the same time. Much like Michaels, his hard-bumping style and ability to make each adversary seem formidable without sacrificing his own credibility was unequalled.

This made him one of the hottest drawing cards in the entire country, especially during his glorious run at the top of Big Time Wrestling, Roy Shire's San Francisco-based promotion. And his promos were just as great as his matches; they created the blueprint for being a white-hot heel, drawing sellout crowds packed with fans hoping to see someone shut him up.

The man known as “The Blond Bomber” had cut his teeth during the dawn of television in the 1950s—a wide open time in wrestling, when the new mass medium forced wrestlers to become

more than just great athletes. Now they had to become great characters. Once upon a time, all it took to be a success was to be a great mat wrestler. But, in the age of Gorgeous George, the no-nonsense approach was no longer enough. Now, wrestlers had to engage an audience with their personalities, speak eloquently and persuasively, and get themselves over with colorful grappling techniques and styles that were bigger, bolder, and more animated. In short, they had to become performers. And there was no one better at it than Ray Stevens.



In the 1960s, “The Crippler” Ray Stevens set the bar for being a wrestling villain in the Bay Area. Here, he has the upper hand on Waldo Von Erich—a villainous Nazi sympathizer who had the rare distinction of being more despicable than Stevens.



Stevens later ventured to the AWA, where he found the perfect tag partner in Nick Bockwinkel. The duo would capture the AWA tag team title on three occasions.

But it was in the decade of JFK and LBJ that Stevens really came into his own, once he hooked up with promoter Roy Shire, who had previously been his tag team partner before retiring from the ring. Shire molded Stevens into a major attraction as the Bay Area's most hated villain. Before long, Stevens came to embody wrestling in the Bay Area, much as Bruno Sammartino embodied the WWWF, The Sheik embodied Detroit, Lou Thesz embodied St. Louis, Fred Blassie embodied Los Angeles, and Verne Gagne embodied the AWA. Speaking of Bruno, Stevens was such a big deal in San Francisco that, in 1967, the WWWF World champion made a rare foray out of the Northeast and came to the West Coast's fabled Cow Palace to defend his crown against him. Not only that: In their two-out-of-three falls encounter, Stevens not only scored a nearly unheard-of pinfall over Sammartino for the first fall, but was actually awarded the WWWF title when he won the third fall via countout. Of course, the title change was not recognized outside of Big Time Wrestling. Stevens

was forced to return the coveted prize since WWWF rules dictated, then as now, that a title cannot change hands on a countout. Nevertheless, the incident stands as a testament to just how much of a phenomenon "The Crippler" was in the industry at the time.

"Ray was a natural," Les Thatcher recalls. "I saw him first when he was 15 or 16, teamed with Don Fargo, and was blessed to get to know and work with him later. One of the smoothest in the ring, and his timing was spot-on. Much respect for his talent."

Stevens' "Bombs Away" finisher (a diving kneedrop to the throat from the top turnbuckle) always spelled victory, and between 1960 and 1970 brought him nine United States heavyweight titles . . . the top prize in the San Francisco promotion. His electric feuds with the likes of Bobo Brazil, Cowboy Bob Ellis, Wilbur Snyder, and Pepper Gomez brought record crowds to the Cow Palace. After nefariously kneedropping Gomez from the top of a ladder in a TV encounter, their ensuing match broke a Cow Palace attendance

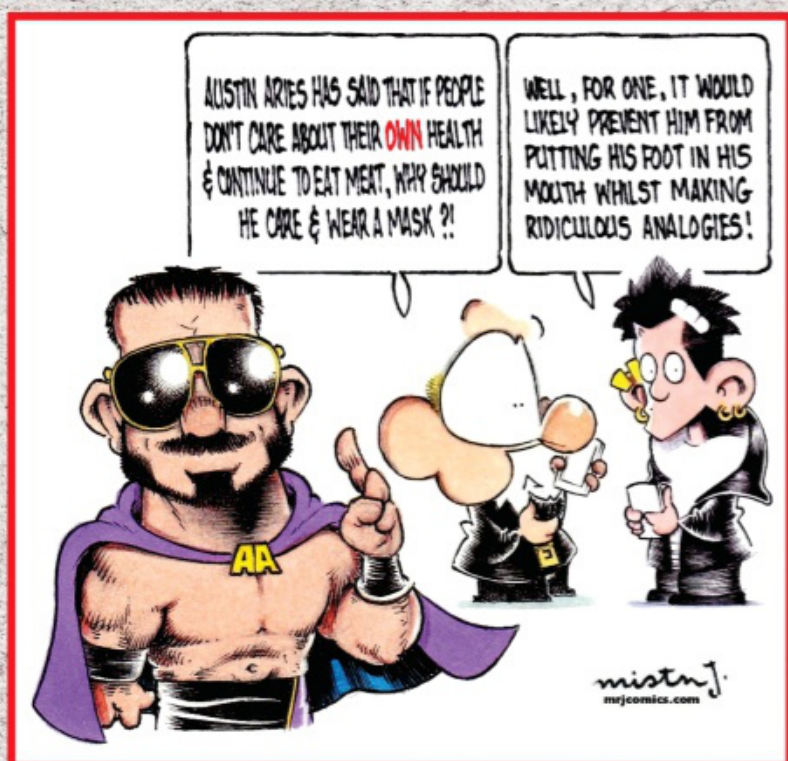
record previously set by Elvis Presley. Many of Stevens' trademark bumps were later blatantly copied by those who emulated him, such as his unforgettable ring post flip, which can be seen in almost every Ric Flair match.

After his historic San Francisco run, Stevens returned to his tag team roots in the AWA, forming championship tandems with fellow San Francisco headliner Pat Patterson, as well as future AWA World champion Nick Bockwinkel. In fact, he and Bockwinkel are often cited as one of the finest tag teams of the 1970s. Stevens even had a memorable run in the WWF at the tail end of his career in the early 1980s, including a celebrated feud with Jimmy Snuka. However, by that time, the out-of-shape, somewhat broken-down, nearly 50-year-old Stevens was a far cry from the exhilarating "Blond Bomber" of old.

Perhaps one reason Ray Stevens isn't as well-remembered today as he should be—aside from the inevitable march of time—is the fact that he never won a major world heavyweight title. Some have chalked this up to the same hard lifestyle of smoking and drinking that eventually caused his skills to deteriorate, as well as an unfortunate reputation for unreliability and reckless behavior—two things no promoter wants to see in a world champion. Nevertheless, during his peak years, Stevens deserves all the credit in the world for innovating what it meant to be a wrestling performer, and for influencing an entire generation of competitors to aim for the very high bar he set. To those fans lucky enough to have seen him in his prime, he will always be the original "Showstopper." □

DRAWING BLOOD

BY JASON CONLAN





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